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## Ice storm impact melts human hearts

Alan Doerksen

KINGSTON, Ont. — Eastern Canada, hard-hit by ice storms and power failures, is now the recipient of vast doses of human compassion. Christian relief organizations, schools and churches have been working hard to help people affected to recover and put their lives back together.

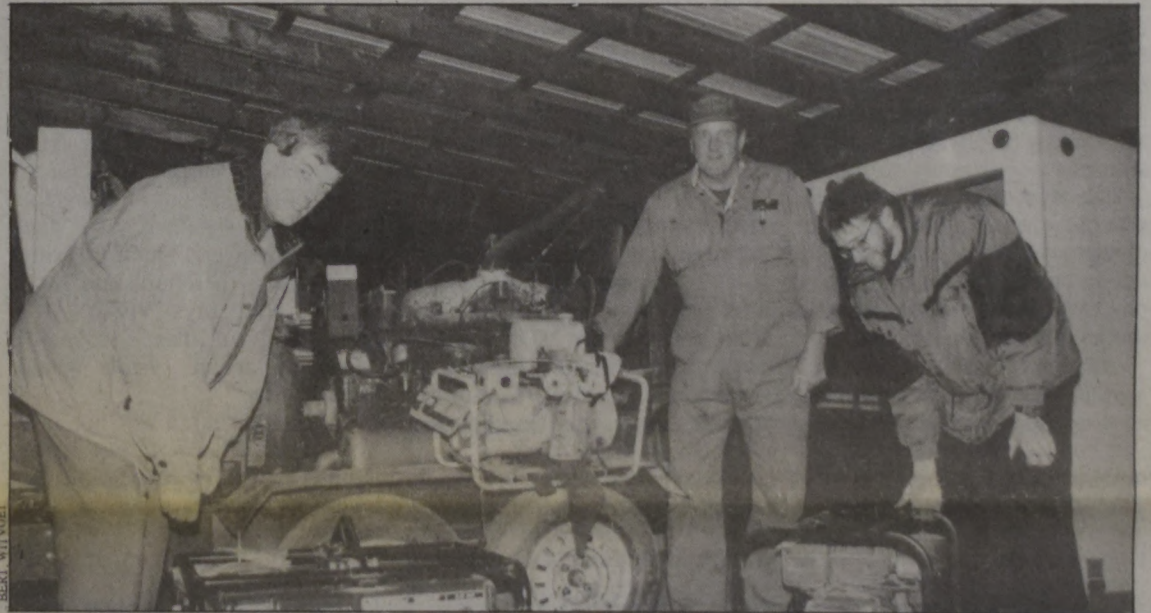
The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) has provided emergency help by collecting generators from private donors and sending them to Eastern Ontario. "We work with the Diaconal Conference of Eastern Canada," explains Jacob Kramer, government relations representative for CRWRC. Deacons of churches in affected areas

have been phoning around to see who needs generators or other assistance.

Generators have been loaned by greenhouse owners and farmers and have a value of about \$40,000 each, says Kramer. Since Jan. 10, more than 200 generators have been sent out by CRWRC.

On Jan. 12, Andy Van Driel of Christian Reformed World Missions and Terry Veldboom, controller of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada, got together with Bill Van Huizen, the owner of Spring Orchards in Beamsville, Ont. (near St. Catharines) to send nine generators east to Williamsburg, Ont. Bill and Wilma Van Huizen delivered the shipment, which

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Andy Van Driel (l.), Terry Veldboom and Bill Van Huizen load up generators to take to Eastern Ontario.

## Tibetan monk tells of torture by China

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — Tibetan Buddhist monk Palden Gyatso has been described as "the monk they could not break."

Gyatso spent 33 years in prison in Chinese-occupied Tibet before escaping in 1992. He arrived in Calgary in December carrying a small, white and blue patterned cotton bag containing a handful of torture devices — electric prods, hand-and thumb-cuffs, and knives that he and others smuggled out of the country during his escape.

"The punishments and hardships I went through are being experienced by Tibetan political prisoners today," Gyatso said in an interview, translated by Nima Dorjee, president of the Canada-Tibet Association. "In fact, it's even worse today."

The diminutive monk came to Canada to talk about human rights issues at the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference in Vancouver in November. He criticized the conference's refusal to discuss human rights and the reception accorded Chinese president Jiang Zemin during his

Canadian visit.

"I noticed the Canadian government and the Canadian people seemed to be at opposite ends," he said. "While he's grateful for the way the Can-

adian government has treated Tibetan refugees, he would like Canadians to be more informed about Tibetan conditions, especially human rights violations. "Conditions are getting worse."

For instance, Tibetans can be imprisoned for 10 years for holding the country's red, blue and yellow Tibetan flag. Once in custody, they are not even interrogated; just beaten and tortured by local police, he said. Then prisoners are taken to a detention centre where they may stay for as long as six months before trial.

Once imprisoned, they are only allowed one visitor from their family, who must be photographed and given identification. Even then, the family is not informed of the prisoner's whereabouts.

The visitor, who cannot be changed, usually is allowed about five minutes visiting time and

must pay a fee, amounting to about six days wages, for the privilege.

Occasionally, a prisoner is taken aside and questioned: "Is Tibet part of China?" If the prisoner answers No, he is tortured and beaten. "You want independence, here it is," his captors yell.

He's heard of prisoners who have been whipped with nettles and then had hot chilis powder rubbed into their skin. If a prisoner is executed at the hands of Chinese authorities, the family is billed for the rope and bullets, he says.

### Planetary pilgrim

Gyatso's story is told in a new book, *Fire Under The Snow — Testimony of a Tibetan Prisoner* (General, \$34.95). In it, Gyatso,

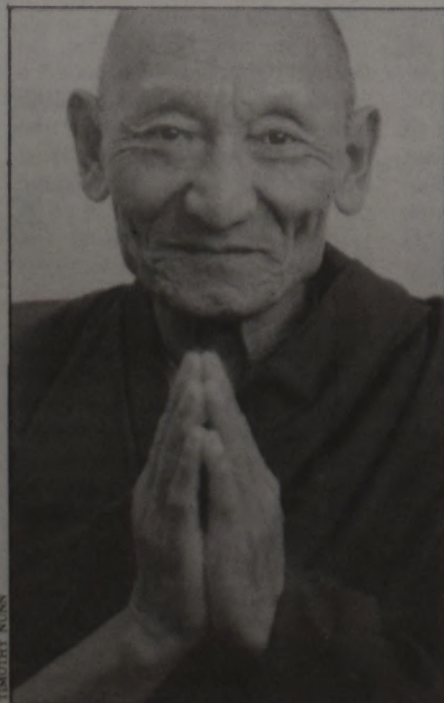
64, documents the torture and numerous beatings (*thamzing*) he and others endured while imprisoned for ostensibly participating in a demonstration.

After he escaped, the Dalai Lama asked him to tell his story to the world. Ever since, he's been a planetary pilgrim with Tibetan support organizations and Amnesty International, whose letter-writing campaign he credits with saving his life.

In 1995, he gave evidence at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

After he left Calgary, he flew to London to testify before a British parliamentary committee. "Only through the interest of people worldwide will there be a peaceful resolution between Tibet and China," he says.

(See related story on page 2)



Tibetan Buddhist monk Palden Gyatso

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## News

# Christians join disaster relief in Quebec, Ontario

... continued from page 1

included their own 50-plus kilowatt generator. In Williamsburg, Tom Luimes of Diaconal Ministries of Eastern Canada and Nick Van Dyk, a board member of CRWRC, co-ordinated the distribution of the generators to Eastern Ontario and Montreal.

## Traumatic time

One grateful recipient of a generator from CRWRC was George Rowaan, pastor of Williamsburg Christian Reformed Church. "Our home is powered by CRWRC," says Rowaan, but he adds that he and his family have still not returned home but are staying elsewhere until the situation improves.

The Williamsburg church was without power for the first part of the storm, but power was restored on Jan. 10, which enabled the church to resume services, unlike other local churches.

"It's very hectic around here," says Rowaan. The ice storm and its consequences have caused "a very trying and traumatic time in this community."

Several local churches have offered their space as shelters. His church has a gas range in its

kitchen and has invited church members to do their cooking at the church.

Despite the co-operation of many local people, Rowaan mentions that some local generators have been stolen, including some belonging to Bell Canada. This has disrupted phone service in the area.

Besides providing generators, CRWRC has helped to set up emergency childcare shelters in Montreal. This involves setting up a play area for children of affected families. In emergency situations, children "lose their certainty," Kramer explains. "Their parents are under stress. We are able to take away that stress."

## Long-term relief

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) is now assessing how it can help with relief work. Abe Ens, director for MDS Canada, will work with the director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) programs in Quebec, Jean-Victor Brosseau.

"An MDS response would focus on the longer-term," says Ens, who farms in southern Manitoba. "There's no point in

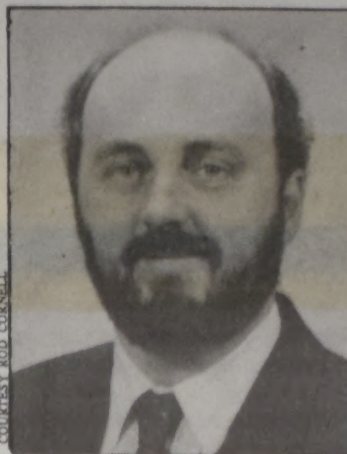
sending volunteers from outside Quebec at this point because of the shortage of housing. We would simply be a burden." But Ens planned to take a portable generator to a church sheltering people who have fled their homes because of the cold.

Brosseau, who lives in the Montreal area, says MDS will focus on the so-called "triangle of darkness" (Granby to Sainte-Hyacinthe to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu).

## Tape and prayer

Kingston, Ont., was one of the first cities hit by ice storms. "The place is devastated," says Ed Visser, pastor of Westside Christian Reformed Church. "The power system of Kingston is hanging together with duct tape and prayer." Ontario Hydro is planning to rebuild the local power grid, says Visser. "It's very likely if there's a major storm the whole system would come down."

Westside church did not lose its electrical power, but many church members' homes did, including Visser's. "We've had about 10 hours without electricity." But compared to



Rod Cornell

others, his family was relatively unaffected, he says.

To cope with the local power loss, Westside church opened its doors on Jan. 11 to offer a hot lunch of chili, soup and sandwiches to those in need, and invited people to stay for the day. In addition, says Visser, "there's been a lot of [church] people living in each others' homes.... We had lots of people over to our place."

In the aftermath of the ice storms, much of Kingston was left without power, many trees

fell and the tower of the local TV station was destroyed, says Visser. Lately, work crews from Bell Canada and Ontario Hydro have come in to help rebuild. Workers have also come in from other provinces and nearby states to help out.

## Community help

Nearby Brockville was also hit by ice storms, but Grenville Christian College has weathered the storm because it has two generators. Grenville is a boarding school with about 225 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 who live on campus along with most teachers.

The school didn't need to cancel classes but did so Jan. 9 and 12 so that the school could open its gymnasium as a shelter, says media spokesperson Dee Tingley. About 120 people stayed overnight at the school in mid-January. Grenville's students served food, and offered babysitting, crafts and sledding to children. The Red Cross provided bedding and food for the school's shelter.

Some of Grenville's staff spent time knocking on doors in the community to make sure occupants were alright, adds Tingley.

During the crisis, says Tingley, "People have been very helpful.... It made for strong community efforts."

## International help

People in the Montreal area have also been helping each other out, says Rod Cornell, principal of Emmanuel Christian School in Dollard-des-Ormeaux (a suburb of Montreal). "Everybody's been pitching in to do what they can," he says.

Cornell and his family lost power for five days, during which time they stayed at the home of his colleague.

Local malls and the civic centre have also become shelters for people with frozen homes. But Emmanuel Christian School could not be used as a shelter because it lost power and was closed until Jan. 14. During the power outage, Cornell had to visit the school daily for a security check because the alarm system wasn't working.

Losing power has been "somewhat demoralizing," admits Cornell, but he is encouraged by the efforts of work crews from as far away as Pennsylvania and Connecticut who have come to clean up fallen trees.

# Chinese haven't crushed Tibetan aspirations



Buddhist monks chant before a statue of Buddha.

## Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Persecution in Tibet by China can be both political and religious, says Lobsang Dorjee, a Tibetan-Canadian living in Vancouver; and these forms of persecution are often intertwined.

Inside Tibet, most of the nationalist opposition to Chinese imperialism is carried on by monks and nuns, he says. They

are the most educated and know the history of Tibet and what democracy and human rights mean. Because of their knowledge and spiritual training, they tend to be more courageous than the laity, asserts Dorjee.

The training of a monk is very much like university training here, he adds, even though it takes place in a monastery. The curriculum includes the study of

culture, history, science, philosophy and medicine. The atheist communist party controls much of the educational system. The communists decide how many can enter one of the 800 to 900 monasteries and what the curriculum consists of.

Dorjee recalls how before 1950 there were 6,000 monasteries in Tibet and how the communists reduced that number to 12 in the '60s and '70s. Before that time, 25 per cent of the population were monks. But during the cultural revolution, just wearing the grab of a monk could get you shot, he says. It is estimated that 1.2 million Tibetans perished since 1950.

The Chinese government has relaxed its grip on Tibet somewhat, but it is still oppressive. Yet they have not been able to crush religion in Tibet, says Dorjee. He estimates that 99 per cent of all Tibetans are Buddhist, one per cent Muslim and perhaps 100,000 Tibetans are Christian.

## Tibetans want independence

The aim of almost all Tibetans is to achieve independence from

China, which claims Tibet as historically part of its territory, says Dorjee. He points to 2,000 years of Tibetan history and a distinct language and culture as evidence that Tibet does not belong to China. Tibetans are cousins of the Mongolians and Kubla Khan, who at one time ruled China and Tibet.

"There has been some influence back and forth between China and Tibet up till the 20th century," he says. When the Buddhist religion came to Tibet from India, the nation became physically weaker because of its spiritual focus. So when the Chinese invaded the eastern part of Tibet in 1950, there was no army to resist them, only two cars in the whole country and no factories.

Today there are six million Tibetans in the greater Tibet, and only two million in what the Chinese call the province of Xizang and Westerners call Tibet.

"We want self-determination," says Dorjee, and he notes that the U.S. Congress has backed up that demand.



## Politics/News

## Robert Latimer and the limits of compassion

Last month Robert Latimer was back in the news. Latimer is the Saskatchewan farmer accused of the "mercy killing" of his severely handicapped daughter, Tracy, in 1993. The Latimer case is of interest not only because of its legal ramifications but also because it illustrates the limits of compassion as a political norm.

I was particularly fascinated by media coverage of the most recent development in the case, namely, Justice Ted Noble's granting of a constitutional exemption to Latimer from the mandatory 10-year prison sentence for his second degree murder conviction.

Television reports featured the tears of the Latimer family, who felt that the penalty of two years less a day, with only one year spent in prison, was already too heavy. But remarkably, we were also shown the tears of the handicapped and their advocates, who were now expressing fears that their very lives could be threatened by what amounted to a slap on the wrist for Latimer. This portrayal may have left television audiences uncertain for whom they were expected to have the greater compassion.

### Compassion is not indiscriminate

The dictionary defines compassion as pity, sympathy, or sharing another person's suffering with a view to relieving it. We properly have compassion for those who are in pain — perhaps over the loss of a loved one, or from a chronic illness, or from persecution for their beliefs. Compassion may be a motivating factor in the quest for justice, but it is not the same as justice, nor can it alone provide much political wisdom. Indeed, if compassion is employed indiscriminately in the political realm, it may effectively subvert civic life by reducing fellow citizens to objects of pity, as Christopher Lasch has pointed out.

Hannah Arendt further argues that compassion can even possess a certain capacity for cruelty if, in its zeal to save people from themselves, it runs roughshod over the realities of



David T. Koyzis

their lives and their aspirations. Yet even short of such extremes, the mere desire to alleviate another's pain cannot itself tell us how to make difficult political choices.

### A classically tragic figure

Politics is rarely about righting wrongs, pure and simple. It is usually about listening to both sides of an argument and attempting to come to an acceptable compromise necessarily falling short of perfection. Such compromise may inflict some degree of pain on both sides, even if it is only the pain of inconvenience.

A simple desire to alleviate pain may prompt us to listen to one side at the expense of the other and thus risk miscarrying justice. Even within the criminal justice system, whose central task is more obviously about righting wrongs, compassion may be misguided. After all, the meting out of punishment necessarily involves inflicting some pain. An unmitigated compassion would seem to prompt us to refrain from punishing, but once again this would be to pervert justice.

Should we then have compassion for Latimer? I believe we should, for Latimer allowed his own compassion to mislead him into doing unspeakable evil.

This makes him a tragic figure deserving of some sympathy. Yet we should not allow our own compassion for the man to prevent justice being done. After all, he did take a human life and must therefore expect to pay the price.

I will not attempt to speculate as to the most appropriate penalty — this is what the law, juries and judges are for — but we must not permit our compassion for Latimer to exempt him from its certain application.

*David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.*

## U.K. leaps toward involuntary euthanasia

LONDON, England (Lifesite Daily News) — In shocking succession England's Royal College of Physicians and the British Government sanctioned involuntary euthanasia.

The *Electronic Telegraph* reported that the College told doctors on December 9 they were justified in withholding "treatment," which includes killing patients by withholding food and water.

The government added fuel to the fire the following day with a radical proposal to allow doctors to decide, even against the wishes of next of kin to starve their patients to death.

Under the new medical guidelines, doctors may decide to euthanize patients (by withholding food and water) if "the patient has devastating and permanent neurological injury which is so incompatible with conscious, self-directed activity as to constitute a demonstrably awful life."

Further, the guidelines said there should be agreement by relatives of the patient about the decision to "withhold treatment," but the consultant in charge should take the ultimate decision, possibly after taking legal advice.

In a green paper from the

Lord Chancellor presented to both Houses of Parliament the establishment of a Court of Protection with expanded powers was proposed.

Instead of family, the paper suggests that people who cannot make decisions for themselves should be placed under the authority of an independent doctor or a court-appointed manager.

Thus the family could be forced to accept medical decisions which include "sterilisation, organ donation, abortion, electro-convulsive therapy and the withdrawal of artificial feeding."

## Are war clouds gathering over Iraq?

(Institute for the Study of Islam & Christianity) — The question is still unanswered — is it to be war again between embattled Iraq and Western powers outraged at Saddam Hussein's renewed defiance of U.N. requirements?

The people of the region think it will; an Arab Christian engaged in literature ministry in Iraq told ISIC as the crisis grew: "We fear this might be our last chance of bringing in the Word."

But if national leaders' threats go from stern words to a shooting war, it is the Christians who will be in trouble. This is because Arab opinion commonly sees U.S. and British actions and attitudes not simply as Western but also as "Christian."

The U.N. sanctions, now in place since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, are often seen by Muslims as Christian-led.

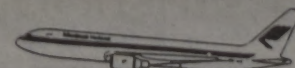
And, as they see it, this pressure has become cruel and unfair.

An officially declared 1.2 million people (unofficially up to 5 million) have perished from lack of food and medicine. Resentment over this toll is directed at national Christians. The Christian community itself has suffered in a different way: many of its members work in restaurants, hotels, and small shops which were among the first to feel the draught of the economic pressure.

Meanwhile, according to some estimates, 95 per cent of the refugees from Iraq to neighboring Jordan are Christians, where some quarter of a million Iraqi Christian refugees live in great poverty. Many desire of to go West but most of the Western countries look with increasing disapproval at requests for entry from impoverished refugees.

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## Editorial

# Could we do without electricity?

Stories about the ice storm that hit eastern parts of Canada and the U.S. have been crowding out other stories in daily newspapers and on television news programs. For the millions of people who actually experienced the ravages of this winter storm, some images and feelings will undoubtedly stay with them for a long time. Like the Red River flood in Manitoba and North Dakota last summer and avalanches in the Western mountains this winter, this ice storm is the stuff you tell your children and grandchildren about. Having been there may well become a mark of distinction decades from now.

What amazes me about the damage and hardship created by this freak storm (if a storm can ever be considered "freak"), is the silent, non-violent nature of the attack on human settlements. There was no roaring of winds and upheaval of earth. All it amounted to was rain coming down and quietly forming layers of ice on electrical wires and trees. Eventually sparks started flying as wires came down, and sounds like gunshots filled the air as branches snapped under the weight. But by and large, this storm must have felt like the benevolent

stroke of an artist's paint brush. Who could have guessed that such a stroke carried a knock-out punch?

## Nature can shrink us

There were strange similarities and differences between this disaster and the floods and avalanches experienced elsewhere. The ice storm was quiet like a flood and unforeseen like an avalanche. It rivalled an avalanche in its terrible beauty and a flood in its widespread impact on human comfort and wealth. There was an aura of suspense in Montreal about the survival of one main power line, similar to the suspense that had gripped Winnipeg: reports have it that the people of Montreal were one power line away from a total, disastrous black-out, as the people of Winnipeg had been one dike away from massive flooding.

What all these disasters have in common is that they make human beings realize how small and helpless they are in the face of these powerful forces of creation. How much more powerful must the Creator be?

## A near-idyllic scene

But none of the other disasters focused so much on our dependency on human technology as did the ice storm. What happens to modern civilization when it is cut off from a seemingly endless source of electrical power? How much of our daily life at home and at work does not depend on the availability of electricity?

Canadian television offered its viewers daily documentaries on the circumstances of cities, rural areas, persons and families affected by the storm. One such documentary showed a farm family in Eastern Ontario. Father and son run a dairy; their respective families joined together in the farmhouse for heat and food. Three generations lived together in a way they never had before.

It looked idyllic. The children could not watch television, hang on the phone or play on the computer. The families talked a lot over meals and preparation of meals. Although the work on the farm and in the house had become burdensome and tiring, there was a general recognition that they were spending "quality time" together and that they had never before felt so close as families. Ironically, communication between family members had gone up exponentially while the modern means of communication were down.

The reporter asked the family whether this would have a lasting impact. The grandmother did not think so. By this summer (when all the effects of the storm will have faded into memory and they will live in separate homes and be hooked up once more to all the gadgets that make them so self-sufficient), we will resume our former lifestyle, she said wistfully.

Of course, she's absolutely right. Our society could not, even if it wanted to, return to conditions of the previous century. If we were to do away with electricity, for example, we would have to expel most of the people from the cities and send them back to the countryside so they could eke out a living by working the ground.

## No turning back the electric clock

Modern cities like Montreal cannot exist without large-scale, efficient farms that cultivate hundreds of acres, milk hundreds of cows, feed hundreds of cattle and raise thousands of chickens and turkeys. These farms need to be powered by large amounts of electricity unless we widely develop alternative sources of energy.

Large apartment buildings and offices cannot put a fireplace or woodstove in every apartment or workplace. What would modern offices and banks do without computers? Think what our homes would be like without electricity. You couldn't have warm showers, quick and constant heat, stoves and microwave ovens, radios and televisions, computers, washing machines, clothes dryers, hair dryers, dishwashers, blenders, coffeemakers, VCRs, CD players....

Our lives would be permanently turned up side down the way lives in Eastern Canada were temporarily turned up side down. Our economies would collapse and Canada would probably lose most of its population to hunger and cold.

## Important lessons to be learned

Let's face it, the only way we could safely get out of our dependency on electrical power would be through a slow and gradual process of technological development. Perhaps a major breakdown like the one in Quebec could have been avoided if Hydro Quebec had updated its equipment and buried its major power lines, but that still leaves the countryside vulnerable to the vagaries of the weather. There is no quick solution to our vulnerability. There may be no solution at all!

We could all learn two important lessons from the kind of disasters we are encountering as a country. First and foremost, our dependency should always be on God, never on technology. Secondly, it should not take a disaster to have us act out the role we are supposed to be playing all the time as each other's keepers and communicators.

Without denying the hardship caused by these disasters for millions of Canadians, we might say with Newfoundland's Rex Murphy that Canadians need disasters from time to time to remind them to be compassionate to each other.

BW

## Christian Courier

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  - ◆ express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective;
  - ◆ provide contact for the Christian community.

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## Letters

# Widespread behavior does not make it okay

This is in answer to Jake Kuiken's questions regarding public policy on homosexual relationships (CC Jan. 9).

First of all, he wonders whether the letter writers, and perhaps myself, are connected to any part of the world where one meets gay or lesbian persons.

Speaking for myself, I am in the motel business. Besides that, I have led chapel services in prisons, hospitals and retire-

ment homes and have met thieves, homosexual persons, wife beaters, drunks, swindlers and the like. Does that lead me to sanction their lifestyles? Of course not. Our criterion is not whether the behavior is widespread, but whether it is in line with God's Word, even if we meet people in the pew.

Kuiken also asked about the distinction between "loving the sinner and

hating the sin." My answer to that is: to help and accept the person who is struggling to overcome the sin, whatever that may be, and to stay away from the sinful lifestyle yourself, in the strength of the Lord. Thus we become suitable as signposts in our society.

Finally, what part of the statement "loving the sinner and hating the sin"

must be used as a basis for public policy development? None of the above. Idealistically speaking, we must use the absolutes of God's Word as a basis. I know that is not done by society. But we Christians must use them because we are not allowed to use a pragmatic approach.

William van Oene  
Welland, Ont.

## Kudos to '2 under 35'

I just read Elizabeth Salomons' and Peter Schuurman's contribution to the Dec. 19 CC and I wanted to let them know that I have appreciated their column this past year. My wife, Carrie, and I have also reflected on the usefulness and even the blessedness of e-mail communication since our families are now so far away from us (we moved from Edmonton last summer to Grand Rapids, Mich., where I'm in the M.Div. program at Calvin Seminary.)

Apart from Elizabeth and Peter's most recent reflection on e-mail itself, I have also benefitted from their discussions of other matters as well. Though it sounds like we are a bit younger than they are, we too are "under 35" and struggle with some of the same issues they have brought up. Their last exchange on the subject of worship (of particular interest to me) was excellent, I thought.

I wish all of you God's blessings in 1998 as you serve him in your own places and ways. I especially want to wish for Elizabeth and Peter a wonderful meeting, should that happen soon. Without wanting to pry, I think CC readers all over would be interested in hearing about that if it happens! (the Dec. 19 exchange made it sound imminent).

Dave Vroege  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Elizabeth and Peter did, indeed, finally meet face to face and will tell you about it in their next column in our Jan. 30 issue. Ed.

## Stark story of abuse defies answers

Wow! The article by Carla Jones (Jan. 2, 1998) hit so hard it hurt. Bravo, Carla, on your courage in writing it, and to you, CC, for printing it. Rarely have I read a more thought-provoking and gut-wrenching account of childhood abuse; told in such a stark and forthright manner, it defies simple answers and religious platitudes.

Abuse of this nature is messy, it's evil and the road it leaves for its victims is arduous and painful. I pray that Carla has the courage to pursue the road to healing, and that her Christian community has the sensitivity to support her in it.

Michael Geisterfer  
Aylmer, Quebec

## Classis takes distance

Classis Huron, in session Jan. 14, 1998 in the Exeter CRC, having taken note of the letter of Dr. Remkes Kooistra to the editor of the *Christian Courier* in the issue of Nov. 14, 1997, passed a motion to send the following communication to the *Christian Courier*:

"Classis Huron regrets that Dr.

Kooistra has again written in the *Christian Courier* about the homosexual lifestyle. As a Classis we distance ourselves from his position."

For Classis Huron,  
Hilbert Rumph, Stated Clerk,  
Drayton, Ont.

## Look for it next week:

Peter Borgdorff, executive director of World Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, will answer, point by point, the 18 questions raised by letter writer John A. Tamming (CC Jan. 9).

## Thinkbit

"Total depravity is a hard doctrine to live up to, but we do our best."

Overheard in Calvin Seminary,  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

## Column got him musing about knowing

Elizabeth Salomons' and Peter Schuurman's ongoing dialogue in CC without having met each other is intriguing. The subject of "knowing and yet not knowing each other" got my thoughts and imagination spinning. Maybe the following sounds garbled, and I could blame it on my age (75); but I won't!

My first thought was: How do I get to know someone and when do I really know another person? You meet thousands of people during your lifetime, but whom do you really *know* and who wants to be really known?

### Holy Spirit helps us

We know many, many people in their outward appearance and in a superficial way — but knowing the heart and mind and soul of another person is a completely different matter. As it says in a song from a musical: "Getting to know you, getting to know all about you..." has always been a fascinating desire in any human being. But who gets to know all about you — maybe only a spouse "knows" his or her partner in the fullest sense possible in human relationships.

But then my mind jumps to the fact that I have never "seen" Jesus and yet I know him as I am fully known by him! Of course, the Holy Spirit is the one who makes spiritual sense of this fact, and yet ... isn't this the only way we as his children should know each other? (or at least seek to know each other?)

Then there's no room for a lot of ballast that hinders us in our relationship with the Lord and with each other. And then I don't have to meet you personally to know you, although it is always very pleasant meeting people "in the flesh" whom you have only "met" through their writings (which represent their minds and their hearts).

I write this on Christmas Eve, having just come back from the funeral of a dear friend, whom I know as a child of God and who went ahead of me to our Father's house, where there is also a mansion waiting for me and for all God's children. I look forward to Elizabeth and Peter's next exchange in the New Year.

Arie J. Klein  
Hamilton, Ont.

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Opinion

Leave Robert Latimer alone

Gerald Oosterveen

Yes, compassion for Robert Latimer can indeed lead astray, as observed in the November 21 editorial. There is a greater danger, it seems to me, in minimizing or belittling this man's suffering. For a father to kill his daughter, not in a moment of rage, but after long years of lovingly caring for her and presumably knowing full well that the wrath of society would descend on him, shows the length to which love will sometimes go.

I can identify with Robert's agony. Twenty-seven years ago, when my nine-year-old son cried out in pain caused by cancer, there was a night I nearly killed him. It was not my suffering I sought to end but my son's, because the best medicines and the best efforts of the doc-

*"Not once in my years as oncology chaplain have I heard a sufferer speak of the blessings of suffering though they freely speak of other aspects of their faith."*

tors at the Mayo Clinic could not stop the pain. But it lay in my power to give him peace and let him go home to Jesus. How can any reasonable person assume a father's suffering ends with the child's death? When the child dies, suffering merely takes a different form. That I did not act on my wish merely shows I did not have the courage that Robert had, nor perhaps the love.

Ennobling for someone else

It is so easy to make light of suffering when someone else does the suffering. It is so easy to believe and claim God will make good come out of suffering, but so hard for a suffering person to feel anything but the endlessly gnawing pain. Of course Robert suffered. Which parent would not suffer when he or she is helpless to lift a burden such as borne by Tracy Latimer? It is so easy to claim that suffering makes perfect, but who ever prayed for God to send a load of suffering so perfection may be achieved? Or is it only suffering persons who need perfection, not the rest of us who are blessed enough to have escaped?

At a presentation I recently gave about care of dying people at the end of life, one questioner stated that he always saw suffering as something "holy, ennobling, enriching." I asked him for whom the suffering was so mar-

vellous and when he would like to begin suffering. He sat down quickly without responding.

Regardless of what Hebrews 2:10 seems to say, Jesus earned our salvation not because he suffered, but because he was obedient. The suffering came as a result of the obedience. Jesus could have avoided or cut short his suffering at any time. He made the choice to remain obedient to God and endure the resulting suffering. And thus we are saved.

Choosing to suffer — or not

Whenever Scripture suggests that suffering ennobles or is rewarded it is always in the context of choice. Christians facing suffering as a result of persecution are encouraged to remain faithful and obedient and not give in to their fears. What is ultimately rewarded is their faithfulness, not their suffering. Their current suffering will not end but be cancelled out by the glory that will be theirs in the world to come.

When cancer patients — or others like them — suffer continued pain there is nothing ennobling, redeeming or sanctifying about that, nor any assurance that enduring this suffering will earn them a greater reward. Their suffering did not come because their faith needed testing, it came because they are unwilling victims of whatever evil in our world causes cancer. They have no choice in the matter, they cannot avoid it. Not once in my years as oncology chaplain have I heard a sufferer speak of the blessings of suffering though they freely speak of other aspects of their faith.

Suffering is evil. If suffering is not evil, but something God intends to use for good, should we not stop taking aspirin for a headache or novocain for a root canal? In fact, should we not beg God to let us suffer so we can also enjoy the blessings that suffering brings? Think of the good we can accomplish by suffering!

Life is incredibly complex. Unlike the editor of the *Christian Courier*, I believe that often in life we are asked to choose between two options of which neither is right. Perhaps mercy killing is still killing. It nevertheless seems to me that sometimes mercy will drive us to a killing we would never contemplate if the circumstances were not so horrible. I say, leave Robert Latimer alone. Why should the law or society want to add to the unbearable burden that is already his for the rest of his life?

Rev. Gerald Oosterveen is the manager of Pastoral Services at Christ Hospital and Medical Center, Oak Lawn, Ill.

Latimer tragedy challenges society

FREDERICTON, N.B. (MCC Canada) — As Irma and Peter Penner ponder the Latimer tragedy, they keep thinking that Tracy's death could have been prevented if the family had had an adequate support system around them. Robert Latimer says his poisoning of his 12-year-old disabled daughter was a mercy killing.

"The hardest thing for any parent must be to see their child in pain and feel utterly helpless in relieving the suffering," says Irma whose 26-year-old daughter Yvonne is also disabled.

Not enough support

Irma recently wrote a book about her daughter, titled *The Right To Belong*. It is the story of a family that believes passionately that all people have a right to belong in society. The Penners are working hard to make that happen. Yvonne has Rett Syndrome, which in many ways is similar to autism.

"Based on pictures of Tracy on her father's knee, smiling, I believe that Robert Latimer loved his daughter — but what he did was absolutely wrong," says Irma, who along with Peter worked with MCC Canada for nine years in the Maritimes as advocates for the disabled. Their last term with MCC ended in 1990 and they currently live in Fredericton, N.B., where Peter is an instructor at the university and Irma writes.

"It seems to me that through his desperate act he (Latimer) is telling society that he has no trust in the medical profession, nor in people in the community, nor in God. Because of his helplessness he put himself above them all, believing he had the answer to relieve Tracy's suffering.

"This reminded me of a mother, years ago, who stood at the grave site of her disabled son and tearfully said, 'I always



Robert Latimer

prayed that he would die before me — so I wouldn't have to worry about him."

"Such feelings expose the deficiency of community support to families," says Irma. The Penners, too, have experienced the lack of community support and it is one of the reasons Irma felt compelled to write the book.

In praise of all efforts

There were other reasons too, going back to 1976, when Yvonne was five years old. Irma had read the story of a young girl with autism, and was encouraged by her parents' efforts and the "miraculous breakthrough." Another parent upon reading the book became angry and shouted, "I get sick and tired of reading books like that. It's fine for them to talk about their daughter, but that will never happen to mine!"

Irma reflected on what she said and recognized truth in her outburst. "I began to realize that many parents work just as hard but never see a miraculous breakthrough. Yet no stories supported these parents. Our family rejoiced at Yvonne's every achievement — however small it was. I wanted parents to know that all efforts are as valuable as those where there are remarkable outcomes."

Parents who have sons or daughters with disabilities need support, but adequate support is generally not available — until a family is in crisis. Even then, the support sometimes comes too late, says Irma.

"Is this what happened to the Latimers? Will Tracy's tragic death challenge people to be more responsive to existing needs, thus preventing further tragedies?"

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## Arts/Media

## Film Review

# Amistad sinks into shallows of politically correct sentimentality

Marian Van Til

## Amistad

Rated AA. Stars Morgan Freeman, Anthony Hopkins, Djimon Hounsou, Matthew McConaughey. Produced and directed by Steven Spielberg.

The less you know about history, the better you'll like this film.

One doesn't like to criticize a film which thrusts into our consciousness the evils of slavery through the dramatization of a real but little known event in American history: the 1839 revolt on the Cuban slave ship *La Amistad*. Nevertheless, negative critique is justified.

In the *Amistad* incident, free-born Africans who had been caught by fellow Africans and sold to white slavers for import to the New World literally threw off their chains, killed all but two of their captors (and a hiding cabin boy) and ended up in the port at Culloden Point, Long Island, under arrest while the mutiny and murder were investigated.

The recently formed United States had banned importation of slaves in 1808 (Britain and Spain, in 1817), but *trading* those born into slavery was allowed until the Civil War. So the legal issue was one of proving whether the Africans were free-born or slaves, and if the latter, the *property* of the Cuban slavers, and under Spain's jurisdiction.

### Hopkins salvages badly written part

The film follows the 40 or so surviving Africans in their fight toward freedom (a dozen died of disease and the harsh climate). Their attorney, Roger Baldwin, a future governor of Connecticut, wins their case, which then goes to trial with another judge, who also rules in their favor. Finally, the prosecution appeals to the Supreme Court (in the film, on direct orders of President Martin Van Buren).

There, John Quincy Adams, statesman, former President, Senator and adept attorney, argues and wins the case (Anthony Hopkins is as masterful as he can be with a small, rather badly written part). The West Africans are free to go back to Africa if they wish (they all do, though one woman later returns to attend Oberlin College in Oberlin,



Djimon Hounsou (l.) plays African leader Cinque.

Ohio, which the film doesn't record).

The annals of this unusual event, which certainly deserves to be much better known, make it a fascinating slice of history, a heart-rending story ending in exhilaration. Spielberg's film will rightly publicize this previous historical footnote. But his telling of it leaves much to be desired.

### Skewed history

Spielberg skews history enough to thoroughly annoy those who have read the historical record, sentimentalizes the story to the extent that there's little complexity in the characters, and virtually writes Christian faith out of the story when it actually played a substantial role.

In *Amistad* there are the good guys and the bad guys, not unlike in most of the rest of Spielberg's television and movie universe. Real human beings become either righteous innocents or evil caricatures.

Ironically, it is the blacks who are presented as the least complex. They come off the stereotypical, romantically envisioned "noble savages."

In the film, the Africans remain in chains for the duration of their long ordeal with the courts (the three trials together took almost two years); they learn but a word or two of English; they continue to dress mostly in loin cloths (in the brisk New England weather and in what looks to be their unheated dungeon-like cells); they

revel only in their own customs and traditions, and when one man shows a rather childish interest in a Bible he has been given, his naive faith is shot down by Cinque, the man who has become their leader.

History records something different. Though held in the county jail in New Haven, Connecticut, while they awaited trial, only Cinque remained in chains, and not all the time. The others lived in several rooms above a tavern across the street. The jailor took the children on at least one wagon ride and everyone was allowed a daily outing on the green, at which time the men's "somersaults and acrobatic leaps startled staid New Englanders," reports a *Smithsonian* magazine article by Donald Dale Jackson, based on the historical records ("Mutiny on the Amistad," *Smithsonian*, Dec. 1997).

### Exotica

The American public (in the North, anyway) was captivated with the Africans from the start, many out of curiosity (the Africans were exotic, as aliens from another planet would be to us). But many Americans got involved out of Christian charity and because they saw the Africans' plight as a chance to bring the Abolitionist cause from the political fringes into the mainstream.

Hucksters were not absent, of course: dramas were written about the event, playing to packed houses; and over time, thousands of people paid the ex-

orbitant fee of 12 1/2 cents each to gawk at the prisoners.

If our late-20th century sensibilities find that sideshow atmosphere repulsive, Abolitionists and sympathizers made sure the Africans were well treated and fed, and put together their defense committee. After the second trial a house was found for them near New Haven and they were tutored in English, and in Christianity by sympathetic Yale divinity students.

### Tearful farewell

By their final release, deep bonds of friendship had formed between the Africans and the Americans who came to their aid. Four Americans accompanied them back to (what is now) Sierra Leone to establish a mission to the Mende people, with the Africans' concurrence; a number of them had become Christians. "More than a hundred people arose before dawn to bid them a tearful farewell in Farmington," writes Jackson. And a few nights later, at a final meeting in New York City, "the Africans presented a Bible to John Quincy Adams in abentia," and Cinque promised well-wishers that he would take care of the missionaries accompanying them back to Africa.

### Simplistic caricatures

It shouldn't be too surprising that none of this shows up in the movie. Hollywood and much of the secular world today apparently see such education and conversion as a sad attempt at religious imperialism at best, and cultural genocide at worst. (This is no attempt to justify situations in which such things were done supposedly in the name of Christ.)

But the film's omissions aren't the only problem. There are sins of commission too. Martin Van Buren, in reality a shrewd politician if not a bright light in terms of principle, comes off as a doddering idiot who had no clue about what was going on just past his nose on the White House lawn.

The 72-year-old Adams, whose legal arguments to the Supreme Court sway that body, is at first presented as borderline senile. We see him grumpily detached, not wanting personal involvement in the case, lost in his own shrinking world. And his big speech to the Court is downright anti-climactic, and does not contain the real basis on which Adams argued: prob-

ing why the United States government seemed to be acting as an agent for Spain.

In reality, as Adams familiarized himself with the case, he was concerned that he would lose himself in "overheated zeal" in defending the Africans. (There's an anachronism too: in 1839 the U.S. Capitol had no dome.)

Then there are the Christian Abolitionists, a dour, hymn-singing, Bible-toting lot who dress in black literally from head to foot and whose faith apparently never allows them to crack a smile (causing them to become the subject of some amusement on the part of Cinque and a friend).

And finally, the British come off as the morally pure knights who are only too glad to treat Africans as fine human beings and blast to oblivion a wretched Spanish slave fortress. But as forebears of the American founding fathers, and not yet nearly at the height of their colonial expansion (not the least in Africa), they can stand proudly next to the Dutch and the Spanish as the authors of the slave trade in the Americas.

### Who's sermonizing?

Parts of this film are very hard to watch, and should be: the ghastly treatment of the slaves is depicted starkly, especially in one horrific scene when some of them are dragged overboard and drowned.

Despite scenes like that, the film's simplistic approach doesn't allow the viewer to become truly emotionally engaged in it, nor does it prompt any serious thinking about still thorny race relations today (it has little of the impact of Spielberg's *Schindler's List*). We see victims and perpetrators, painted mostly in broad, black and white strokes (so to speak). Even Spielberg's depiction of the Nazis and their Jewish victims — perhaps the classic black-and-white case — had more nuance.

All this makes one feel like he or she is being manipulated into accepting some moral or social lesson the film wants to make in order to convert the viewer to its point of view. That sounds a lot like preaching to me — missionary preaching. Not very effective missionary preaching, but nonetheless the kind of activity that's supposed to be so politically incorrect these days.



## Church

## Christian radio aims at women worldwide

CARY, N.C. (TWR) — Increasingly burdened for the spiritual plight of women around the globe, international Christian broadcaster Trans World Radio (TWR) is launching a major new initiative which includes boosting the number of programs specifically geared toward women.

The venture is known as "Project Hannah — Women of Hope." Its ultimate purpose is to help enable TWR to broadcast the gospel to even more women worldwide. One of the initial goals is to educate and mobilize as many individuals and church groups as possible to participate in a Global Prayer Network, calling on people to pray for women who still need to hear the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

At present, TWR airs wom-

en's programs in Croatian, English, Farsi, Hindi, Hungarian, Mandarin and Spanish. A unique pilot program for Asia Pacific is in the works. Produced first in English by an international team of women, it will be broadcast throughout Asia, then will be translated and adapted into different languages and dialects of the region.

### Daily Christian living

The program's format will be a magazine or talkshow style and will feature interviews, testimonies, nutritional and health information, family and child-rearing discussions, Christian news about women around the world, and a devotional pointing listeners to apply the Bible to their daily lives.

As funds become available and additional programs are

aired, more women will hear how they can experience God's love, freedom and power as they face life's challenges and struggles. They will also learn how to discover eternal salvation through Jesus Christ and how to follow him, in spite of their cultural, social or economic status.

"Project Hannah has the potential to be a cornerstone in TWR's endeavor to reach out to the more than two billion women worldwide," stated Marli Spieker at a special kickoff luncheon in Cary, North Carolina, at the organization's international headquarters. "We have a passion to spread the light of God's love and hope to the countless numbers of unloved and forgotten women who live in spiritual darkness."

Spieker, a longtime TWR missionary who produced women's and children's programs in Brazil for 13 years, is spearheading this initiative. "God has

given us two effective tools to fight for the souls of lost women — intercessory prayer and Christian radio broadcasts," she said. "TWR's transmitters around the world are able to reach women in the privacy of their homes, especially in societies where active evangelism is prohibited."

Trans World Radio broadcasts more than 1,200 hours of Christian programs each week in over 130 languages from 12 primary transmitting sites and by satellite. Millions of people in more than 160 countries are touched by the gospel every day through TWR's programs.

### Need is staggering

The physical, emotional and spiritual needs of women around the world are staggering. The World Evangelical Fellowship Commission on Women's Concerns reports that:

\* Women make up ap-

proximately 80 per cent of the world's refugees.

\* More than three million women in the world of child-bearing age are HIV positive.

\* Almost two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women. In Africa and Asia, as many as 75 per cent of the women over the age of 25 cannot read or write.

\* Fifty per cent of the women in the United States experience violence in their marriages.

The Global Evangelization Movement states that Muslim women represent nearly one-fourth of the world's female population. Because they have little or no contact with "outsiders," there is minimal opportunity for exposure to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through direct evangelism. Since there are needs and aspirations common to women across the globe, TWR is able to touch the lives of women through its programs.

## Slain student's lungs breathe new life

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (EP) — A man in southern Indiana is breathing more easily after a double lung transplant in which he received the lungs of 14-year-old Nicole Hadley. Hadley was one of three students at Heath High School, near Paducah, Kentucky, killed in the internationally publicized incident in which another teenaged student opened fire on his schoolmates as they met for a pre-school prayer meeting.

The transplant recipient, Thomas Hereford IV, a United Methodist, said of the gift he received out of Nicole's death, "That was an act of courage and compassion [on the part of her parents] that would not have been possible without some very strong faith."

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## Dutch approve church order for united Protestant church

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Three Dutch denominations took a major step toward union by approving a church order at a combined synod in November. With only 12 per cent of delegates voting against the proposal, the course for the United Protestant Church in the Netherlands (VPKN) was set. Final union, however, is still some years away and will require approval of each party to the union.

The three churches, The Reformed (Gereformeerde) Churches in the Netherlands (GKN), the Netherlands Reformed (Hervormd) Church (NHK), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (ELK) have been in the process for over a decade. The process is called Together on the Way (Samen op Weg).

Among the controversial points was the name of the new church. Earlier the churches had decided not to use elements of their own names, such as "Reformed," "Lutheran" or "Evangelical." However, opposition came from a branch of the NHK called the Reformed Alliance (Gereformeerde Bond). They proposed "United Church of the Reformation" to keep the ties of the new church to the Reformation, rather than just "Protestant." That and a few more

alternatives did not get many votes, and the new name was accepted.

Of the three churches only the NHK has a current article on marriage in its church order. Since both the GKN and the ELK have more liberal acceptance of marriage and non-marital relations, the orthodox wing of the NHK feared the sanctity of marriage would be watered down. The combined synod, however, rejected the NHK's proposal to take over the article on marriage from the NHK's church order.

### Possible barrier

Since the marriage clause could provide a barrier for the NHK's final acceptance of the union, the synod decided to make a declaration on marriage. This declaration would be part of accompanying explanations for the church order. In the declaration, they said, "Marriage ought to be considered holy as a bond of love and faithfulness before God's face, which mirrors the relation between Christ and his Church." However, they added "with pain" that among them there "is no unanimity concerning other life commitments (levens-verbintenissen) as bonds of love and faithfulness before God's face."

The new church will no longer recognize unbaptized

children as members. In the NHK, there was a class of membership called "birth members," meant for the unbaptized children of adult members. They also agreed to allow local churches to serve the Lord's Supper to baptized members, including children, who had not made profession of faith.

The new church order uses the Leuenberg Concord as a way to bring Lutherans and Reformed together. The combined synod defeated a proposal to place this understanding in the bylaws instead of the church order itself.

A wide margin agreed the two traditions "came together under a common (gemeenschappelijk) understanding of the gospel."

## Prostitutes go to church, not jail

LIMA, Peru (EP) — Prostitutes picked up on the streets of Lima, Peru, aren't all going to jail. Instead, some are being taken to a church to read the Bible, have a simple meal and talk with a pastor. The program, which is not for habitual offenders, is being run by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Luis Mostajo, mayor of Lima, has endorsed the program.



## Church

## International meeting will plan Hispanic evangelism

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (EP) — Anglo Christian leaders from around the world intend to meet in an International Congress on Hispanic Missionary Evangelism in San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 25-30, 1998.

Called "San Juan '98," the congress is being organized by the Rev. Raimundo Jimenez, founder and president of the Los Angeles-based Hispanic Christian Communications Network. The goal of the meeting is to create strategy for reaching Hispanics in the United States and the whole of the Spanish-speaking world during the next century.

Honorary co-chairmen for San Juan '98 include: Pastor Jack Hayford, senior pastor of the Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California; Dr. Bill Bright, president of Campus Crusade for Christ; and evangelists Luis Palau and Alberto Mottes.

Latin leaders including Mottes, Palau, Nicky Cruz and Hermano Pablo are expected to

speak at the congress, as is Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse and vice-president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Hayford says, "It is the time to strategize and, with Holy Spirit sensitivity move ahead on a co-ordinated campaign of Gospel presentation to the growing millions of Hispanics in the United States who need a relationship with Jesus Christ."

### Challenging mission field

Bill Bright adds, "For more than 30 years I have been vitally involved through the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ in helping to take the message of our Lord to the Hispanic world. As you know, we work with Hispanic people in most Latin American countries and with concentrations of Hispanic people in major cities of America. I believe the Hispanic people represent one of the most strategic and challenging mission fields of evangelism in America."

## Mongolia will release impounded Bibles but not Christian tapes

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia (EP) — The Mongolian government recently agreed to release 10,000 children's Bibles seized last year. However, the Buddhist-dominated country said it will not release Christian videotapes it impounded at the same time.

The Bibles were shipped to the Mongolian Bible Society and seized under a law restricting the introduction of religious information from other nations. That law has been used to suppress both Christianity and Islam in Mongolia, even though the country officially guarantees freedom of religion.

hindered by problematic issues of religion."

The government gives Tibetan Buddhism preferential treatment, and Badral said the government needs to "pay attention to preventing conflicts between religions." The state-run newspaper *Ardiin Erkh* asserted that the videotapes were being held because they portrayed Christianity as a superior religion to Buddhism.

### Religion so 'problematic'

The seizure of the Bibles resulted in protests from European Union parliament members and letters of criticism from around the world.

S. Badral, an aid to Prime Minister Mendsaikhanii Enkhbaatar, said, "It has been decided that the 10,000 books would be released as a sign of good will. We hope foreign relations and cooperation will not be

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (EP) — Whether they experience it fighting over a toy with a sibling or watching the villain struggling with their favorite TV superhero, conflict is nothing new to children. But where do they learn about forgiveness?

A recent national survey conducted in the U.S. by the Barna Research Group for Lutheran Hour Ministries looked at how children learn about forgiveness.

## Controlling our bodies

*"You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph.4:22-24).*

I recently travelled to Michigan to be introduced to my new niece, Julia. She is still at the helplessly tiny stage of life, less than a month old, a stage at which every gurgle, yawn, and flailing of her tiny legs appears miraculous.

Her mother (my youngest sister) marvels at all the noises which come out of this small body. Julia snuffles and grunts, croons and burps. She makes no effort to silence her gurgling stomach or to disguise the fact that she has gas. She is natural in every sense — and nature is noisy.

Part of the growing up is learning how to be a bit less natural, how to discipline our natural bodies into something closer to silence. We learn to stifle yawns, to chew with our mouths closed, to drink without slurping, to breathe through our noses and to control flatulence.

Those are good things to learn, we all agree. The endearing, unreflective naturalness of a newborn would not be endearing in an adult, or even in a 10-year-old. We naturally know that nature must be controlled and reigned in.

### Frustrated resolve

At the beginning of a new year, many of us are full of resolution about gaining control of our physicality. We intend to exercise, to eat right, to lose weight, to quit smoking or drinking or eating meat or depending on caffeine. But before the year is a month old, most of us have been frustrated in those resolves.

Our bodies often seem to have a will of their own. The craving for chocolate or a smoke takes over, and we find ourselves starting at a half-eaten candy bar or a lit cigarette and wondering how it came to be there in our hand. When, exactly, was the moment when we decided to abandon resolution and cave in to desire?

### Going overboard

In our day, biblical scholars have taught us that Paul's talk about the desires of "the flesh"

## Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer  
Andrew Kuyvenhoven  
● Laura Smit  
Al Wolters

is not to be taken as a criticism of the physical. Rather, Paul is using the flesh/spirit language to discuss a distinction of life with God versus life in rebellion against God, or external life versus internal life, or life on earth versus life in heaven.

When such reading is taken to extremes, as it often is, any suggestion that we should be controlling our passions or taming our bodies is dismissed as an anti-physical misreading of the text.

It is true that in some ages the church has been too condemnatory of our bodily life, too quick to dismiss the body as evil and too prone to hope for some bodiless, spiritual existence in the life to come. We are embodied creatures by God's design, and our faith in the resurrection of the body entails that we will be embodied for all eternity. It is inappropriate to dismiss our physical bodies as the source of sin and evil.

### We need discipline

At the same time, our own experience makes clear that there is real tension between our mental selves and our physical selves. We should not be too quick to jettison hundreds of years of Christian tradition about the importance of controlling our passions and physical desires.

If I cannot resist the appeal of a bar of chocolate, how can I claim to be free in Christ? If I cannot function without the stimulation of caffeine, cannot control my sexual fantasies, cannot prod myself to exercise or maintain my health, why should I expect to see discipline in my prayer life, or in my church attendance, or my stewardship?

Just as I expect my beautiful little niece to grow in her ability to control her bodily functions, I expect myself to be growing in my ability to control my bodily desires.

*Laura Smit is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who is currently completing doctoral work in philosophical aesthetics at Boston University, Boston, Mass.*

## Lutheran program helps children learn forgiveness

While the findings indicate that families serve as the primary teachers of forgiveness (61 per cent), more than one-third (36 per cent) of Americans believe influences outside the family — peers, the media, churches and schools — actually have the most influence in how children learn about forgiveness.

To help families reinforce forgiveness and other values with children, Lutheran Hour Min-

istries has developed "The Puzzle Club," a new multimedia program based on the adventures of three animated junior detectives. Characters in "The Puzzle Club" solve mysteries while helping uncover values lessons about family, friendship, forgiveness and hope.

"In doing the national survey, Lutheran Hour Ministries found that there is a significant number of American families that do not

feel they have the most influence in teaching their children about forgiveness," says Dandi Daley Mackall, author of *The Puzzle Club Mysteries* adventure novels and national spokesperson for the program. "The Puzzle Club" program benefits families by filling a void. "The Puzzle Club" helps parents teach important values, such as forgiveness, and then reinforces those values in children."



## Feature

# Dinner with the Pope

George VanderVelde

This invitation is handed to me in the midst of a small group meeting of the Synod for America in Rome. It doesn't take long to decide which is the spot which I will mark "X." Besides, the "bearer," a rather official looking man with perfectly trimmed hair, an impeccable grey wool overcoat and a neat red tie, awaits my immediate response.

After the first excitement subsides, I wonder what on earth I will wear. Leaving Toronto, I assumed that I would attend the Synod largely in a listening mode. For that reason I had packed no dressy clothes, not even a suit. Instead, I took my trusty old tweed jacket which I wore day in, day out — and of course, also when, contrary to expectations, I had to address the Synod.

"I can't possibly wear that to a dinner with the Pope," is my first thought. My second: "Well, it's a good excuse to buy one of those nice Italian jackets." So that afternoon I go into a few of the men's stores which I pass on my daily walks to and from the Vatican.

But my fingers fumble over the exquisite, soft fabrics only long enough to find a price tag or two. I quickly decide that I cannot justify such an expense — not even for the Pope. So I resign myself to having to wear the tired tweed.

Some Canadian priests doing further study in Rome, who serve the Synod as stewards and recording secretaries, have invited me to join them for lunch at their residence. It has been arranged for the Thursday before "the dinner." I must not be fully resigned to wearing my tweed jacket, for I notice that one of the Canadian clerics looks about my size.

## A borrowed jacket

Providentially, after the lunch, this perfectly proportioned priest asks a few of us to join him for coffee in his apartment. I tell him that I have an awkward question: "Would you by any chance have a jacket that is dressier than the one I'm wearing now?" When he hears why I am asking, he flings open his closet, takes out a beautiful navy blue, wool blazer and says, "By all means. It's the closest this

*The Holy Father extends to you an invitation to have dinner with him in the papal apartment, Friday, 5 December 1997 at 1:30 p.m.*

*Below please mark an "X" on the line next to your response and return the invitation immediately to the bearer.*

*Thank you.*

*— I shall attend — I shall not attend*

jacket will get to the Pope." Then, with a chuckle, he adds, "There's only one condition: you have to tell me which part of the jacket the Pope touched." He even lets me pick out a tie to go with it. I am set.

Except for how to get to the dinner. Every time I have walked across St. Peter's Square I inadvertently glance up towards the top floor of the papal palace, and especially at the window where I had seen the Pope address the crowds at noon the previous Sunday. But for all I knew, the strange statement that is always false was true here: "You can't get there from here."

## From 'here' to 'there'

I turn for help to the American Cardinal who was to join us four fraternal delegates who had been invited to the dinner. He suggests that I meet him at 1 p.m. at an office inside the Vatican. Though wondering why we would need a vehicle to travel a distance that would take no more than a few minutes on foot, I slide into the car at the appointed time.

With considerable speed the car whizzes past the Sistine Chapel, along massive walls, through archway after ancient archway, along what looks like a narrow lane way, through a stately courtyard, until we final-

ly sweep into the palace courtyard.

The main doorway is flanked by Swiss guards in their colorful blue and yellow striped livery topped by rakish black berets. As we pass, they click their boot heels as they salute smartly — not for me, I come to realize, but for the cardinal.

When the other dinner guests, who had come on foot via the "Bronze Door" (the pedestrian way from "here" to "there") join us, a security person leads us to the elevator, which takes us to the top floor.

Walking along a glassed-in corridor which surrounds the inner courtyard, we arrive at a high-ceilinged waiting room within the papal apartment. Several colorful modern mosaics depicting scenes from the Gospels grace the three solid walls. The two tall windows in the fourth wall look out on St. Peter's Square down below. These huge windows are only a few meters over from the Pope's "tiny" window from which he regularly addresses the crowds.

As we wait, an obvious question suddenly comes to me: "What is the protocol for dinner with the Pope?" "There really isn't any," the Cardinal responds. "Things take care of themselves."

After about 10 minutes, a door leading in the direction of

the "tiny window" opens. Aided by his cane (and wearing what looks to me like the same white cassock that he had worn all week!), the Pope enters the room. He shakes hands with each of the guests.

## Dutch greeting

This was not our first encounter. I had met him very briefly upon arrival at the Synod, though in a somewhat unusual way. The contact person from the Roman Catholic ecumenical office had led me over to the Pope as he was leaving the Synod hall after the close of the evening session. Having exchanged greetings, I went back to my seat to pick up my papers and briefcase.

At that moment, someone nudged me and said that the Pope was waiting for me. I thought he was kidding. I looked up, and indeed the Pope had moved only a few steps; around him, like a small entourage, hovered scarlet-topped bishops and synod officials.

Since he continued to look my way, I realized that this might indeed be a papal summons, though the slight smile on his face suggested that this would

ing beside him a short distance I responded with "Welterusten," explaining that it conveys the wish that he rest well. The Pope's frail and fatigued appearance at the assembly that evening made this often perfunctory "Good night" a heartfelt hope.

But now it is afternoon and the Pope does look more rested. After the handshakes the pontiff leads us down some hallways in the apartment. Clearly this isn't your average bachelor's suite. Although there is nothing especially opulent about this part of the "apartment," the ceilings are high, the hallways long.

Walking right behind the Pope, I am struck by his frailty. His weakened condition had been obvious at the plenary sessions of the Synod: his gait had been extremely slow, aided by a walking cane; his head was bent over; his speech seemed sluggish; at times his voice quavered. But now over these wooden floors, his tan leather slippers make a continuous shushing sound as they appear and disappear beneath his cassock.

## Fame and frailty

The combination of the ordinary and the extraordinary, of fame and frailty, has a strange effect. At times, I forget that this is the Pope who is leading us down the hall. Momentarily, I feel as I would if it were my own father I am following.

While the Pope goes to his private chapel to pray, we are led to our seats in the dining room. The elaborate place settings and the papal seal inscribed on the plates indicates that this is not a commonplace "working" dinner, except perhaps for the Pope.



The view the Pope gets from the "tiny window" from where he addresses crowds in St. Peter's Square below.

be less ominous than it sounds. When I approached him once more, he leaned over and said, in perfect Dutch, "Goedenavond."

Any concerns I had about protocol evaporated. After walk-

## Playful smile

We remain standing behind our chairs for some minutes until he enters. He takes his place at the centre of a large rectangular table. The Pope's



**"When I approached him once more, he leaned over and said, in perfect Dutch, 'Goedenavond.' Any concerns I had about protocol evaporated."**



private secretary, a Polish priest who has served him since his days as Archbishop of Krakow, sits at one end of the large rectangular table, and a younger assistant at the other.

The Pope conveys a rather informal, relaxed impression. His kindly demeanor and friendly, even playful, smile have a way of putting one totally at ease.

As he glances at a sheet of paper which has on it our names and presumably some particulars about our backgrounds, he proceeds to raise questions. He is especially interested in the relationship between evangelicals and the Roman Catholic Church. He asks about the role of the "sects" in Latin America. This has become a rather controversial issue of late, since some Latin American bishops have referred to all evangelical and Pentecostal groups as "sects."

#### **The soul is safe**

While this points to painful tensions, we also talk about areas of co-operation and agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and precisely the more conservative, evangelical wing of Protestantism. In that context we talk about the Canadian situation, where this bond manifests itself in co-operation with the Evangelical

Fellowship, and with the Christian Reformed Church (especially its Committee for Contact with the Government).

This provides an opportunity to mention an incident in the recent consultation between the World Evangelical Fellowship and the Catholic Church. At the most recent WEF meeting, which I attended, one of the participants, a prominent evangelical theologian, described the problems with liberalism in his (mainline) denomination as a "struggle for the soul of the church." In that discussion in Jerusalem, another evangelical participant observed that, while the Roman Catholic Church, too, has theologians who can be described as "liberal," the problems this produces can hardly be described as a struggle for the soul of the church. In the Catholic Church, the central core of the Christian faith is maintained.

One cannot characterize the conversation around the table as formal, yet neither is it as a cozy chat. The Pope is the host who engages us in the questions he raises. I do not consider posing questions of the Pope, nor does anyone else. In that sense, protocol does "take care of itself."

As the conversation progresses, a nun of about 65 and a man

somewhat younger, in a waiter's uniform, serve us with silent efficiency. The sister's habit is crowned with the traditional large white, winged headdress that, halo-like, sets off her face, across which plays a hint of a smile.

#### **Wanting nothing**

The younger assistant, sitting at one end of the table, springs into action the moment the wine level threatens to approach the bottom of any of the guests' glasses. At the other end of the table, the Pope's personal secretary sits with impassive face; yet, I have the distinct impression that he does not miss a thing. I wonder whether he keeps a diary.

After about an hour and a half the dinner nears its end. The younger assistant discreetly places a small box beside each guest's plate. Soon after that, we all stand up — whether on a signal from the Pope or from his personal secretary, I don't know — and follow the Pope out of the dining room.

This time when he moves into his private chapel, we accompany him. It is a gorgeous small space, with, overhead, modern, back-lit stained glass windows, predominantly blue. The Pope kneels on a bench near the front, where he begins each day by

praying for nearly an hour, we had been told. The rest of us kneel on the 10 or so individual benches behind him. We pray the Lord's Prayer together; after that we continue to kneel in silent prayer for some time, until the Pope gets up and leads the way out of the chapel, stopping outside its door to say goodbye to each of us. I linger behind a bit, realizing that this is where the Pope spends an hour in prayer before mass each morning.

#### **A Reformed gift**

I have with me a copy of the *Our World Belongs to God* the "contemporary testimony" of the Christian Reformed Church — which I intend to give to him! In the front, I have written a few words of appreciation, referring to the Pope's recent encyclical *That They May be One*, in which he states: "What unites us is much greater than what divides us."

My inscription goes on to express gratitude for the Pope's public witness to the breadth and depth of the Gospel. The unmistakably Reformed booklet I hand him is also a testimony to the truth of the Pope's statement about the relationship of that which unites to that which divides us.

Along with the others, I back-

track along those wonderful corridors, take the elevator down, walk past the Swiss guards into the enclosed courtyard. The Vatican car again awaits the Cardinal. This time I decide to join the others on foot; I want to find out how one does get from "there" to "here."

We cross the courtyard, then walk down several gently angled, elegant stone staircases. Finally we arrive at the Bronze Door in one arm of one of the colonnades that seem to reach out to embrace the crowds on St. Peter's Square. Now I know on which door to knock in order to see the Pope — "next time."

As we walk across St. Peter's Square, I glance up at the top floor from which we have just come. It doesn't look quite the same, somehow.

#### **Contemplating the Millennium**

Oh yes, the little box next to our plates. It contained two silver 10,000 Lire commemorative coins. On one side, a profile relief of the Pope's head; on the other, depictions of biblical scenes: on the one coin, the healing of the paralytic; on the other, a boat with the figure of Christ in the bow, arms stretched out over a raging Lake Galilee. There's the same Latin inscription on both coins: "Towards the Holy Year Two Thousand." (To Polish Christians the millennium has peculiar significance, and John Paul II, as a Pole, has imbibed that view.)

Naturally, the Pope realizes that our visit occurs on Saint Nicholas Eve. In fact, at the end of that evening's session, he urges his bishops and cardinals: "Don't forget the feast of Saint Nicholas tomorrow."

And the fine navy blue jacket? I will return it on the Saint's birthday.

*George Vandervelde teaches at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, where he is senior member in theology and has special expertise in Roman Catholic and ecumenical theology. He is also active in ongoing evangelical-Catholic discussions, particularly in the World Evangelical Fellowship Roman Catholic Consultation. He represented the Canadian Council of Churches at the Synod of Rome as one of only four Protestant fraternal delegates worldwide who were invited to attend.*



## Feature

# Investing with compassion

John Valk

Can a Christian be a capitalist? That was the discussion among a group of students at the University of New Brunswick late one Friday afternoon. Most said no. Christians are called to love their neighbor. Capitalists exploit their neighbor.

But perhaps there is a little capitalism in many of us. When it comes to investment, don't we all try to get the best price, swing the best deal, attain the best return? What, then, of regard for our neighbor, and seeking *first* the Kingdom of God?

In the world of investment we easily become removed from our neighbor. Terms such as balance sheets, dividends, prices and returns seem so distanced from the injunction to love our neighbor. We quickly relegate such concern to the (Sunday) "back burner." We become enmeshed in two worlds — money and God — and give the matter no further thought.

## Serving the poor

There is, however, a group which does give it further thought. It is concerned with sound investment. It is even more concerned with how and where its money is invested.

The Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society (EDCS) is a worldwide organization which puts investment dollars to work based on the biblical injunction "Love thy neighbor." It invests for concerned groups and individuals — people with a few dollars or thousands of dollars — in order "to serve the monetarily poor." Its desire is not maximization of profit, but



*"In the world of investment we easily become removed from our neighbor. Terms such as balance sheets, dividends, prices and returns seem so distanced from the injunction to love our neighbor."*

maximization of opportunity — love of neighbor investing (EDCS Annual Report, 1996, p.11).

In the past, many groups simply gave money to assist the poor. Lending them money, with expected interest payments, "was considered distasteful, if not greedy." EDCS shared that feeling. It also recognized, however, that individuals and churches who invest could use some of their investments in ways that benefited economically disenfranchised people.

When one invests solely to achieve maximum financial return, some of the investment

ends up supporting war industries or corporations with questionable human rights or environmental practices. EDCS seeks alternative investment opportunities, with biblical injunctions in mind. Regrettably, when it asked churches to look at these possibilities, it was often met with the negative reply: "The higher the return we get on our investments, the more money we can spend on the mission of the church" (EDCS, p. 19).

## Loans to the poor

The mission of EDCS is to "mobilize investment capital in order to provide loans to poor people for viable and productive business enterprises which operate on principles of justice." It

gets its money from "churches, church-related organizations and others who subscribe to the promotion of development as a liberating process aimed at economic growth, social justice, people's participation, self-reliance and respect for creation" (EDCS, p.1).

EDCS invests in people "who are at the very bottom of their local community" — "banking the unbankable." It loans money to enterprises which the banks consider "too risky." But "risky" can be a confusing term. Think about the millions, if not billions, of dollars banks write off annually on companies in North America which go bankrupt. EDCS has a 90 per cent rate of return on investments.

EDCS operates with the following project funding criteria: "The enterprise supported must benefit poor and disadvantaged people; benefits must be widely disbursed and not result in the enrichment of a few organizers or investors; the enterprise must contribute to the social and economic advancement of the larger community in which it is located; special attention is paid to the ecological impact; the co-operative structure is favored, and preference is given to enterprises in which women are direct beneficiaries and are directly involved; the enterprise must be economically viable, with appropriate management and technical leadership, and will become self-sustaining within a reasonable period of time" (EDCS, p. 10).

EDCS has a total of \$109.8 million (U.S.) invested in 275 projects throughout the world. These include endeavors to improve fishing, farming, coffee production and export, publishing and printing, water and road transportation, hospital services, furniture making, rural development, textiles, housing projects, vocational training, credit unions, mining, etc. These projects provide employment for thousands, and directly benefit hundreds of thousands.

## 'Win-win' situation

The EDCS endeavor is a "win-win" situation. Investors gain on their investments, though the gains are modest. The "monetarily poor" are given financial opportunities to improve their situations. EDCS makes it possible to invest "with compassion."

A biblical verse, included in the EDCS Annual Report, says: "Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unploughed ground... until he comes and showers righteousness on you" (Hosea 10:12). Investing in people is an alternative to investing in things. For the sake of profit, capitalism makes no such distinction. For the sake of the Kingdom of God, the Scriptures do.

Information about EDCS can be attained from the Ecumenical Development Society of Canada, 183 Chedoke Ave., Hamilton, ON L8P 4P2. Phone: (905) 528-2730; fax: (905) 526-8697.

*John Valk is the Christian Reformed chaplain at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.*

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## Feature

# The effect of drug addiction on family life

## Many grandparents are raising their grandchildren



"Time and time again, after some short, hope-filled pauses, Lori succumbed to the old habit."

### Maria Stam

"No one can understand what it's like to live with an addictive child unless you have experienced it yourself." These are the words of a mother who for the past 14 years has struggled with her daughter's drug addiction.

As a long-time friend of Beth and Frank (not their real names) I followed the tragic events in their family with sadness and empathy. Even though they had moved to Vancouver and I live in London, I remained in close contact with them. I had always been inspired by their dedication to their three children, their warm, loving home and their life lived by Christian principles.

### Parental pain

Why was this happening to them? Why did it happen to the daughter they had received with joy after years of waiting for another child while their two sons were already attending school? No matter how hard I tried, I could not find an answer, and the "why" is still shrouded in mystery.

Lori (not her real name) had grown up to be a lovely, attractive girl and an excellent student. About two years after she had entered high school, the drama began to unfold. The

happy, optimistic letters I was receiving from her parents suddenly turned into worrisome descriptions about their daughter's experiments with drugs. The occasional substance abuse became gradually more frequent, and, as time went on, the letters sounded more alarming. They told about the parents' suffering; their self-doubt, shame and guilt. Frank and Beth tried everything possible to save their child, including professional counselling. Their life was torn between disappointments and hope, let-downs and new expectations.

Despite ugly confrontations and degrading admissions to authorities that their daughter was a drug-addict, they did not give up hope. Supported by their two sons, they kept their door open for Lori. Beth and Frank had never experienced any serious problems with their boys, and in spite of all self-searching and questioning could not find the answer to why the daughter they loved dearly was causing so much heartache to herself and the family. Time and time again, after some short, hope-filled pauses, Lori succumbed to the old habit.

Beth finally joined a support group for relatives of narcotic-addicted family members. Meeting people with similar

problems and sharing experiences provided some comfort. Yet the situation worsened when they were informed of their daughter's pregnancy. New worries were added because another life now became endangered.

Frank and Beth did not despair. Instead they looked at the pregnancy more positively, hoping it might bring a change for the better. And indeed, Lori abstained from heavy drugs during that period.

Fortunately, the baby was healthy and the grandparents accepted the child in their home and promised to support mother and baby. But once more their hope was shattered when Lori left their house to join the father of her child, a heroin addict. When he was arrested for drug trafficking, she disappeared without informing her parents about her whereabouts.

Frank and Beth continued to care for little Sarah (not her real name). They realized that there was no chance for stability in Lori's life so they decided to apply for guardianship of their granddaughter, which the court granted them.

The decision to raise Sarah as their own was not made lightly. It placed a great responsibility on their shoulders at an age when they were looking forward to worry-free retirement years. But in that loving environment the baby grew up to a healthy toddler and kindergarten pupil. While the grandparents became more and more attached to their granddaughter, their concerns for their daughter never diminished.

At one point, they found out that Lori had been arrested but could be released from prison if she would enter a drug-rehabilitation centre. Her brothers paid the fee for admittance in a suitable facility. But Lori left the centre without permission and went into hiding.

### Terrible uncertainty

During that terrible uncertain time Beth wrote, grief-stricken: *We have lost our daughter, and we long for the daughter we once knew. Our little Sarah has come to us as a way for us to assuage our grief. She does not replace her mother but I feel God, in his wisdom, has given us a way to concentrate our energy and at the same time give*

*her the best care we are capable of.*

The couple's spiritual strength nourished by their faith helped them to go on with life and not give in to despair. Yet, another blow was waiting for them when Lori, now treated with Methadon, recently tried to invalidate

**Despite ugly confrontations and degrading admissions to authorities that their daughter was a drug-addict, they did not give up hope.**

her parents' guardianship over her daughter. The court rejected her appeal.

Frank and Beth, upset about their daughter's action, now live in constant fear that she will try to take Sarah from them despite the fact that Lori is now HIV positive and suffers from liver and kidney problems. If the close relationship between grandparents and granddaughter were disrupted at this point, it would probably have dire consequences on both sides.

### A national problem

The tragedy is that Frank and Beth are not the only ones. Today many grandparents are

raising their grandchildren under similar circumstances. I found the following information on the World Wide Web: "At present over 3.7 million children in the United States are living with grandparents or relatives. Over one third (1.4 million) of these kids do so without their own parents living with them. Countless other grandparents and other concerned relatives are dealing with situations in which they wish their grandchildren lived in safer, healthier environments."

Drugs, prostitution, deceased parents, the inability to parent, and lack of interest are just some of the reasons grandparents are raising their children's children, according to American reports. In the United States support groups have been formed to help grandparents cope with caring for their grandchildren under difficult circumstances.

At present there are no Canadian statistics available. My Vancouver friends are convinced that in Canada, too, thousands of grandparents are replacing the parent of their grandchildren. But grandparents often shy away from reporting the inability of their sons and daughters to raise their own children.

*Maria Stam is a freelance writer who lives in London, Ont.*



## Voortman

*Over 40 Varieties*

*of*

*Fine Cookies*



## News/Sports

# New CRC series links sermon to dinner table

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Many churchgoers admit to amnesia when it comes to remembering last Sunday's sermon.

*HomeLink*, a new product by CRC Publications, may provide an antidote. "*HomeLink* is our attempt to reinforcing the message people hear on Sunday by having them prepare for it and reflect on it during the week in their daily devotions. So it links pulpit and dinner table," says Rev. Robert De Moor, editor in chief for the Education, Worship, and Evangelism Department of CRC Publications.

*HomeLink's* trial balloon was entitled "When Advent Doesn't Feel Like Christmas," written by Rev. Scott Hoezee, pastor of Calvin CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich.

*HomeLink* has two main components: a set of sermon and worship guides to use at church (available in the quarterly journal, *Reformed Worship*) and a set of devotionals to use at home.

The devotionals are formatted



Rev. Robert De Moor

on tear-off pads and tie directly into the Sunday worship services. "People go to church and participate in worship, then they use the daily devotionals for their household worship," says De Moor. *HomeLink* encourages personal and group reflection by offering ideas and questions to stimulate discussion each day.

## Prevents 'drowning'

De Moor is happily surprised by *HomeLink's* popularity. *HomeLink's* Advent series has already sold out of two consecu-

tive printings. And, although no research has been completed yet, De Moor thinks he knows the reason for *HomeLink's* popularity.

"Our suspicion right now, informed by asking around, indicates that pastors and other church leaders are genuinely concerned that the Sunday message so easily gets drowned out by all the other messages with which our society floods us," De Moor says. "They see this as an effective tool to prepare people better for worship and to help them remember the good Word they heard."

So *HomeLink's* trial balloon is off and sailing. "We're seriously considering doing more of these," says De Moor. "We're sold on the idea."

CRC Publications is the publishing arm of the Christian Reformed Church and produces church school curriculum, periodicals, worship resources, devotional books, and study materials on the Bible and current issues.

## After the Buzzer

00:00



Tim Antonides

## The enemy

Take a trip to New York City. Ask people on the street whether they're Mets or Yankees fans. They'll pound their fists, they'll salivate. There's no middle ground in the Big Apple. You love your team and hate the other. Calgary and Edmonton, huge rivals, Stampeders and Eskimos, Flames and Oilers. It gets ugly. Again, you don't "kinda" like one or the other in Alberta. One of them is the enemy.

I attended a Christian college in the American Midwest. The basketball rivalry between our college and the one 15 miles away was intense. Every time the two teams played, there was a sell-out. People went crazy. They screamed at the opposing fans. They nearly blew a gasket when their team slam-dunked or hit a three-pointer. Referees who made poor calls at decisive moments in the game needed to enter themselves and their families in a witness protection-type program, living the rest of their lives in obscurity in New Mexico.

## Deeply ingrained

Rivalries are a strange and fascinating phenomenon. They are derived out of much more than just tradition or myth. There are often economic, social and political elements at the core. The English/French tension is evident in such rivalries as the Leafs/Canadiens. To rural Americans, the small-town Green Bay Packers are a clear favorite to big city boys like the Chicago Bears. I ask you this: What middle-aged ironworker in Pennsylvania wouldn't root for the Pittsburgh Steelers? It's a sure bet. Bring the Philadelphia Eagles into town and we have ourselves a civil war.

God created us with hearts that seek direction. We were created in the image of our Maker, with an inherent need to belong to his Kingdom. Despite the Fall, our hearts still crave direction. Unfortunately, there are all too many forces at work to fill the void. Everyone has an inherent need to believe in something or someone.

Sports teams give a small measure of this. I don't think it's too much of an exaggeration to say that some people follow sports teams religiously because it gives them something to identify with and believe in. Unfortunately, what starts as a fun, entertaining, cathartic hobby can become an obsessive, pathetic, colossal waste of time.

## Belief in a team

Rivalries intensify a person's belief in a team. I recall the Canada [hockey] Cup of a couple of years ago (a.k.a. "The World Cup," but I have a hard time letting go of the "Canada" part). Canada and the U.S. had to play a three-game series. What Canadian wouldn't be keyed up for that one? I was glued to the T.V. I screamed, hooted, raged and whined.

I still remember the fury I felt when the Canadians ended up losing to the Americans. I felt disgrace, shame and anger. It ruined my evening. I had taken my strong feelings of patriotism and thrown in some personal experiences with U.S. border guards to thicken the broth. I ended up letting the whole thing boil over and scald me.

Let's try to keep things in perspective. Maybe when the team that we "hate" comes to town we can try to keep some form of rationality. Is it the rivalry that's getting us fired up or is it other elements manipulating us? Let's enjoy it for what it's worth (a great game between worthy opponents) and avoid buying into a bunch of culturally dictated nonsense.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 5 and coaches basketball at Surrey Christian School, Surrey, B.C.

# FROM COAST TO COAST

## ENGLISH RADIO:

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan - CKAY.....	10:00am	1500
Burns Lake-CFLD.....	9:15am	1400
Kitimat-CKTK.....	8:30am	1230
Osoyoos-CJOR.....	8:00am	1490
Penticton-CKOR.....	8:00am	800
Port Alberni-CJAV.....	7:00pm	1240
Prince George-CIRX.....	7:00am	94.3
Princeton-CHOR.....	8:00am	1400
Smithers-CFBV.....	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CHOR.....	8:00am	1450
Vernon-CJIB.....	9:30pm	940

### QUEBEC

Montreal - CIBC.....	7:30am	600
Montreal - CKGM.....	9:00am	990

### ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBQ.....	8:00am	1340
Ft. McMurray-CJOK.....	8:30am	1230
High River-CHRB.....	6:30pm	1280
Edmonton - CKER.....	11:00pm	101.9

### SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL.....	8:00am	1280
Weyburn-CFSL.....	8:00am	1190

### MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM.....	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM.....	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS.....	9:15am	810

### ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK.....	9:30am	1240
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Chatham-CFCO.....	6:30am	630
Fort Frances-CFOB.....	9:30am	640
Guelph - CJOY.....	8:30am	1460
Hamilton-CHAM.....	7:30am	820
Kapuskasing-CKAP.....	7:00am	580
Kingston-WLKC.....	7:30am	100.7
Newmarket-CKDX.....	9:30am	88.5
Oshawa-CKDO.....	8:00am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS.....	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHVR.....	10:00am	96.7
Samia-CHOK.....	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS.....	8:45am	1240
Windsor-CKLW.....	8:30am	580
Wingham-CKNX.....	10:30am	920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm)...	8:00am	102.3

### NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ.....	9:30am	700
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### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY.....	7:00am	630
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### NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY.....	6:00am	1420
Kentville-CKEN.....	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD.....	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC.....	7:30am	1320
Sydney-CJCB.....	8:00am	1270
Weymouth-CKDY.....	8:30am	103.1
Windsor-CFAB.....	8:30am	1450

## TELEVISION:

### Faith 20-TV

(Monday to Friday)

Check your local listings for cable outlets airing *Faith 20*.

Alberta - Lethbridge - CJIL  
.....Thursday - 9:00pm  
.....Saturday - 12:00noon

### Vision-TV

(every Saturday)

British Columbia..... 7:00 & 10:00pm  
Alberta..... 8:00 & 11:00pm  
Sask. & Manitoba..... 6:00 & 9:00pm  
Ontario & Quebec..... 7:00 & 10:00pm  
Nfld., N.B., N.S. & P.E.I. 8:00 & 11:00pm



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## Church press quotes



Rev. Jacob Kuntz

## Christmas and poverty

*The Catholic New Times is characterized by a deep concern for the poor in our society and for the growing gap between rich and poor. The issue of December 28 especially dealt with these issues. We quote the following passages from its editorial "God makes a home among us: the promise renewed."*

"This year, as poverty grows even as talks abound about restoring some social services, and bank profits soar into the billions, and the future of our atmosphere is the focus of deal-makers pitting the industrialized giants against the developing throngs, we look for the human face of God in our midst to remind us that we are not alone.

"Today, we see 50 million refugees wandering the globe in search of respite from war and starvation; we see multinational corporations ruling the world, seemingly impervious to any efforts to curb their authority or profit margins.

"And we dwell on the central human experience of uprootedness that is so commonplace to so many. Any downtown street-corner in any major city is crowded with people we casually call homeless. The same cities are full of strangers forced to leave home to find work or follow jobs, sometimes separated from family or the land that

gave a sense of home.

"It is this very deep need for a sense of home that leads us into another understanding of Christmas, another way for our late 20th century minds and hearts to understand the incarnation.

"The Incarnation is about God making a home in the world, and about God *being* a home in the world, no matter what our sense of home may be. Jesus made a home among us and through Jesus we are rooted and we are at home in the world. The very name we proclaim at Christmas tells of this anchor we have been given, as we sing of Emmanuel, God among us.

"This mystery turns us outward to work for a better earthly home for all our world's peoples, for the meaning of the Incarnation is as communal as it is personal.

"And so at this time of God's coming, we pray, 'Come, Lord Jesus, and fill the hearts of thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy love.'"

## Farmers and computers

*The Canadian Mennonite carries a column called "On the lighter side," with lighthearted stories and news items. The Nov. 24 issue tells us what Mennonite farmers think when they hear computer language:*

Log on — Make the woodstove hotter.

Download — Getting the firewood off the truck.

Floppy disk — What you get from carrying too much firewood.

Hard drive — Getting home in the winter.

Windows — What to shut when it's cold outside.

Byte — What the black flies do.

Chip — Munchies for TV.

Micro chip — What's left in

the bag after you eat the chips.

Modem — What you did to the hay fields.

Dot matrix — Old Dan Matrix's wife.

Lap top — Where the kitty sleeps.

Software — The plastic cutlery you get with fast food.

Mouse — What eats the grain in the barn.

Main frame — What holds the barn up.

Enter — City talk for, "Come on in, eh?"

## Dealing with street people

*Maranatha News is, as it calls itself, a "cross-cultural evangelical newspaper dedicated to serve the Christian community." It is distributed free to schools, churches, bookstores, etc. In its Oct. 25/Nov. 7 issue we found an article, "Here I stand," by Michael*

*Coren. Coren is a well-known journalist and talk show host who can regularly be heard on CFRB Toronto.*

*He is also a Christian and not ashamed of it. In this article he writes about his experiences with street people. We quote it in its entirety.*

"I'm not a very good Christian. I try my best and occasionally I feel that in some areas I'm getting close to what I'm supposed to be. But in general terms, no, I fail. I don't imagine that anyone reading this column will think particularly different about themselves. That, of course, is one of the glorious and mysterious paradoxes about our faith. If we are proud of our achievements as Christians, our pride prevents us from being genuine Christians.

"I try as much as possible to react in a positive and constructive way to people on the street who ask for money. There are those teenagers out there who are clearly well-fed and belligerent and do not need any financial help. But there are many, far too many, street-dwellers who for reasons of poverty or mental illness are living wretched lives. To give or not to give is not really the question. The only real issue is how to give.

"I don't give cash. First, it

might be spent on drugs or alcohol. Second, it is too cold and anti-human. To throw a few spare coins into someone's outstretched hands is simply unacceptable and Christian charity is more about love than loot. I decided some time ago to ask beggars if they were hungry. If they say that they are, which is invariably the case, I take them to the nearest store and buy them a carton of milk, a sandwich or even a bag of cookies. In doing this I give them a small chance to speak to me and I to them. They are no longer anonymous people but individual characters. They communicate, feel, need, love and are loved. They are brothers and sisters.

"Just a few weeks ago I walked across St. Clair Avenue in Toronto to a corner store with a disheveled man, his ripped clothes stained with urine and his head jerking nervously. I admit that I was uncomfortable and gauche. We went into the store together. I moved to the

front with a handful of items for the man and he stood just behind me. The young woman behind the counter took the food and my money. As she did so her fellow worker looked at the street person and said to him, 'Do you need serving or are you two together?'

"A pause as long as history. Were we together? Was I, with my jacket and tie and a house and a car and a mortgage and a job 'together' with this man who smelled of a toilet and was covered in dirt? As I say, I am a bad Christian. But God is a good God. "Yes," I said, 'We're together.'

"I did not say very much to my new friend and I have not seen him since that afternoon in late summer. I should have done more for him and I doubt if I changes his life very much. It did not appear to me as if there was very much he could have done to help me.

"But he changed my life forever."

## Russian law restrictive

*In 1997 the Russian parliament passed a law "On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations" which seriously curtails the possibilities for evangelistic work in Russia. The War Cry of December 6 contained an update on the Salvation Army in Russia and explained that even though the new law is a*

*disappointing development for many Christians, yet "it does not herald the end of our ministry in Russia."*

*In the Russian Federation, the Salvation Army is a legal organization and therefore still enjoys many rights.*

"Permitted activities include the performance of divine services, indoors and in the open air; establishment of food and used clothing distribution centres; consultation services to citizens; assistance in preparing and submitting documents and applications, and other activities linked to such consultation; setting up canteens, cafés and second-hand shops; leasing of premises for worship services and administrative purposes; receipts of donations from citizens or individuals; maintaining international links and contacts; entrepreneurial activity; and conclusion of labor relations with employees.

"Prohibited activities include operating Sunday schools, establishing alcohol and drug addiction centres, hostels or centres for the homeless and elderly,

and children's institutions; maintaining clubs and centres for children and adults; printing or publishing religious papers, magazines or books; and work in prisons, schools and hospitals.

"We do not want to jeopardize the ministry and service of the Salvation Army in the Russian Federation and therefore strict

adherence to the guidance given is required.

"At this point in time we will claim the promises of God, go through the doors he will open, and not deny his name and calling."

*Jacob Kuntz is a retired Christian Reformed minister who works part-time at Holland Christian Homes in Brampton, Ont.*

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## Classifieds

Classified Rates	Anniversaries		Obituaries	
<p>(Revised February 1, 1995)</p> <p>Births \$25.00</p> <p>Marriages &amp; Engagements \$40.00</p> <p>Anniversaries \$45.00</p> <p>2-column anniversaries \$90.00</p> <p>Obituaries \$45.00</p> <p>Notes of thanks \$35.00</p> <p>Birthdays \$40.00</p> <p>All other one-column classified advertisements \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00</p> <p>Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> All rates shown above are GST inclusive</p> <p><b>ATTENTION!</b></p> <p>a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p><b>NEWLYWEDS &amp; NEW PARENTS</b></p> <p>We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p><b>Christian Courier</b> 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	<div></div> <p><i>Congratulations to Lucas and Lammigje Mulder (nee Steenbergen) on their 50th wedding anniversary!</i></p>		<p>May 22, 1978 - Dec. 28, 1997</p> <p><i>With this child sent from above, came stronger faith and richer love, and soon we knew the privilege given, in caring for this gift from heaven this precious child, so meek and mild was heaven's very special child.</i></p> <p>Having given us the privilege of caring for this special child, God opened heaven's gates and took home our dearly loved son and brother</p> <p><b>GLENN JOSEPH BOER</b></p> <p>at the age of 19 years.</p> <p>Glennie was a member of Hope Chr. Ref. Church</p> <p>Survived by his loving parents Jake and Kathy Boer.</p> <p>Brothers:</p> <p>Jack &amp; Joyce Boer</p> <p>Rick &amp; Debra Boer</p> <p>David &amp; Carolin Boer</p> <p>Sister:</p> <p>Theresa Boer</p> <p>Grandmother Mrs. Theresa Vis and numerous nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles and cousins also survive.</p> <p>Predeceased by sister Toni Boer (Nov. 1993).</p> <p>Funeral services were held Dec. 31, 1997, at 10 a.m., in Hope Chr. Ref. Church with Pastor Jim Dekker officiating.</p> <p>Correspondence address: R.R. #1, South Gillies, ON P0T 2V0</p>	
	<p><b>Anniversaries</b></p> <div></div> <p>On Jan. 30, 1998, we hope to celebrate the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents</p> <p><b>CLARENCE and SYA DYKSTRA</b></p> <p>We are thankful for all you have been for us and wish you God's continued blessing for the years ahead. With love, your grateful children:</p> <p>Peter &amp; Linda Dykstra — Brampton</p> <p>Tim, Tal</p> <p>Harry &amp; Marina Dykstra — Ottawa</p> <p>Josh, Shane, Caleb</p> <p>Jo-Ann &amp; John Fekkes — Georgetown</p> <p>Chris, Jackie, Mike, Nick</p> <p>Clarence &amp; Ingrid Dykstra — Waterdown</p> <p>Jason, Rachel, Denise, Stephanie</p> <p>Helen &amp; Alec Kononiuk — Port Elgin</p> <p>Jacob</p> <p>To celebrate this event we have open house on Saturday, Jan. 31, 1998, in the Senior Centre on Central Avenue in Beamsville, Ont., from 2 to 4 p.m.</p> <p>Best wishes only please.</p> <p>Home address: 4941 Alexandra Ave., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B5</p>	<p><b>Anniversaries</b></p> <p>1942 December 3 1997</p> <p>With thanksgiving and joy we give praise to God for His faithfulness to our parents</p> <p><b>GEORGE and GRACE ZEE</b></p> <p>these past 55 years.</p> <p>Love and congratulations from your children:</p> <p>Ebeline &amp; John Hawtin — Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Cor &amp; Doreen Zee — Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Frank &amp; Marlys Zee — La Glace, Alta.</p> <p>Al &amp; Rhonda Zee — Banff, Alta.</p> <p>Tena &amp; Abe Homeman — Rollyview, Alta.</p> <p>Rosa Zee — Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Annette &amp; Will Greenwood — Medicine Hat, Alta.</p> <p>John &amp; Cheryl Zee — St. Albert, Alta.</p> <p>and 24 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.</p>	<p><b>Births</b></p> <p><b>DEKLERK:</b></p> <p>Once again, we, Jim and Nelly (Haanstra), thank our heavenly Father for blessing us with another child,</p> <p><b>SHAWN HARVEY</b></p> <p>on Dec. 24, 1997.</p> <p>He is a welcomed brother for Christopher, Tammy, Lindsey, Allen, Derrick and Robyn. Shawn is the 15th grandchild for Ike and Marie Deklerk and 42nd grandchild for Joyce Haanstra, all of Dunnville, Ont.</p> <p><i>Praise God from whom all blessings flow.</i></p> <p>Address: R.R. #9, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W8</p>	<p>Went to be with the Lord, peacefully, on Jan. 3, 1998, our much loved father and grandfather</p> <p><b>REINDER MIDDEL</b></p> <p>Beloved husband of the late Janna (Nanninga) Middel.</p> <p>Dear father of:</p> <p>John &amp; Carol — Tillsonburg</p> <p>Evert &amp; Evelyn — Goderich</p> <p>Betty Tolsma — Goderich</p> <p>Ann &amp; Bert Kolkman — Mount Brydges</p> <p>Jake &amp; Aida — Rockville, Maryland</p> <p>Adrian — New Westminster, B.C.</p> <p>Ron &amp; Tracy — London</p> <p>Frances &amp; Wayne Kuntz — Bayfield</p> <p>Janna Hoscoe — California</p> <p>Also survived by daughter-in-law Shirley Middel, 29 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren and one sister, Rommie De Jong of the Netherlands.</p> <p>Predeceased by one son, Albert Middel, one son-in-law Gerben Tolsma and two brothers Albert and Arie.</p> <p>Funeral service was held at Trinity Chr. Ref. Church, Goderich, Ont., on Tuesday, Jan. 6, 1998, at 2 p.m., Rev. Jack Quartel officiated.</p> <p>Psalm 107: 28-30</p> <p>Correspondence address: Betty Tolsma, 163 Mary Street, Goderich, ON N7A 3A7</p>
<p><b>ATTENTION!</b></p> <p>If you are considering sending us an ad via fax, please be sure to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• send printed or typed copy</li><li>• include billing address</li><li>• include contact person with phonenummer.</li></ul> <p>Thank You.</p>	<p>Take action!</p> <p>Place an ad in our <b>Business Directory.</b></p>		<p><b>Accommodation</b></p> <p><b>Share accommodations with two other males.</b> Christian male, non-smoker, use of full house, laundry. Hamilton Mountain location. \$325 per month plus utilities.</p> <p><b>Call Marcel at (905) 387-7444.</b></p>	<p>Interested in placing an ad. Call us for details.</p>



## Classifieds

## Obituaries

The Hague, the Netherlands  
The Lord called home his children  
**JOACHIM ZWIJGERS**

on July 6, 1997, in his 94th year,  
and

**MAATJE ZWIJGERS-  
MEULMEESTER**

on Jan. 13, 1998, in her 89th year.  
Father and mother of:

John & Fenny Zwygers — Waterloo,  
Ont.

Opa and Oma of:

Christine & Jerry Troianello —  
Whittany, N.J.

Jim & Joanne Zwygers — Alliston,  
Ont.

Gary Zwygers & Gwen Battler —  
Kitchener, Ont.

Opa Opa and Oma Oma of Jeremy,  
Steven and Christopher Zwygers,  
Alliston, Ont., and another great-  
grandchild is Nicole Zwygers,  
Kitchener, Ont.

Correspondence address:

J. and F. Zwygers, 474 Parkwood  
Crt., Waterloo, ON N2L 4A8

## Miscellaneous

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Let us know how much you are able to pay and include the name  
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You may contact:

**Stan de Jong, Manager**  
**Christian Courier**

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## Job Opportunities

## Calvin College Education Department



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ministration experience; 3) a scholarship agenda; and 4)  
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Calvin College is a Christian college within the Reformed  
tradition of historic Christianity and is an equal opportunity  
employer. The College encourages the application of  
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should forward a letter stating qualifications and curriculum  
vitae to:

**Dr. L. Stegink, Department Chair, Education Depart-  
ment, Calvin College, 3201 Burton, S.E., Grand Rapids,  
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## Miscellaneous

## Teachers

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year. Applicants need to send a  
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Send applications to:

**Peter Van Huizen, Principal**  
**Langley Chr. High School**  
22702-48 Ave., Langley,  
BC V2Z 2T6

Phone: (604) 533-0842

Fax: (604) 533-0842

E-mail: LCSMH@Axiomnet.com

**NEWMARKET, Ont.: Holland  
Marsh District Chr. School,** needs  
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e-mail: hmdcs@interhop.net  
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Mail to: HMDCS

18955 Dufferin St., R.R. #2  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 4V9

## Support Reformed Faith Witness (RFW)

**Mission Statement:** *Reformed Faith Witness is a Christian  
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Due to the effects of the recent postal strike, Ottawa has extended  
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Thanks so much!

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## COUPON

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Code: \_\_\_\_\_

*P.S.: CC subscription and advertising payments are not tax deductible.  
Only amounts of \$10 or over clearly designated to Reformed Faith Witness  
will be officially receipted.*



## Classifieds

Vacation	Job Opportunities	Miscellaneous
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<p><b>Teachers</b></p> <p><b>BARRIE, Ont.:</b> Timothy Chr. School is accepting applications for two possible teaching positions in <b>grades 6 and 7</b>. If you are able to articulate a rich Christian perspective, establish a warm rapport with students and have specific training in computers or visual arts, please direct your resume to: <b>Mrs. Jane Tjeerdsma</b> Timothy Christian School 49 Ferris Lane Barrie, ON L4M 2Y1 Only suitable applicants will be contacted.</p>		<p>This is the time to subscribe to North America's only Reformed weekly newspaper. If you gain a new subscription for us, we will reward you by sending you the new, just released, <b>Liberation Choir CD (#2)</b> featuring the 170-voice choir, conducted by <b>Willem van Suydam</b>, organist <b>Martin Mans</b>, and soprano <b>Colleen Greidanus</b>. The concert was recorded in Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Toronto, Ont.</p> <p><b>COUPON</b></p> <p>Send this coupon to us and enclose a cheque or money order for <b>\$43.50</b> (or <b>\$35 US</b>), payable to <i>Christian Courier</i>.</p> <p>Name (new subscriber) _____</p> <p>Address _____ Town/City _____ Code: _____</p> <p>Please send CD to: _____</p> <p>Name (present subscriber) _____</p> <p>Address _____ Town/City _____ Code: _____</p> <p><b>Note:</b> * This offer is not valid for subscription renewals. * Cheque/money-order must be enclosed with this coupon. * Offer valid as long as supply lasts. * Only one CD per subscriber.</p> <p>Send to: <b>Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</b></p>



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**An Anniversary coming up?  
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If you would like to place an anniversary announcement please note the dates that *Christian Courier* does not publish a paper (see page 5, publication box). Please keep in mind the date of the anniversary and the open house, if there is one. **Ten days before the issue date** all copy should be in. This will avoid the disappointment of people being informed too late about an anniversary date or open house of dear friends.

**Calendar of Events**

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

- Jan. 24** A celebration on the occasion of the retirement of Harry Antonides, former CLAC Director of Research and Education. At 7 p.m., Best Western Hotel (corner Shawson & Dixie Rd.) Mississauga, Ont. (close to CLAC's head office). Info.: (905) 670-7385 or fax (905) 670-8416 (#).
- Jan. 25** Dutch worship service led by Rev. Ralph Koops, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.
- Feb. 4** Annual "Church & The Law" seminar, for ministers, church leaders and Christian charities, providing practical information on current legal issues. From 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m., Queensway Cathedral, 1536 The Queensway, Toronto (Etobicoke), Ont. Held in conjunction with the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. Main speakers: Carl Juneau (Revenue Canada) and Father Francis G. Morrissey (Ottawa's St. Paul's University). Info.: Phone (519) 669-5137, Fax (519) 669-3291.
- Feb. 7** Presentation of "The Ragamuffin Gospel," a musical journey of the heart, 7:30 p.m., Maranatha CRC, 301 Scott St., St. Catharines, Ont., Info.: (905) 934-0631.
- Feb. 25-28** The 1998 Stone Lectures, featuring Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff and presentations by five panels of scholars. Topic: "Religion, Pluralism, and the Public Life - Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for the 21st Century." Sponsored by the Princeton Theological Seminary, the Centre for Public Justice, the Free University in Amsterdam and Calvin College. Info.: Phone (410) 571-6300, Fax (410) 571-6365, e-mail: inquiries@cpjustice.org
- March 2** 1998 Ministers' Conference, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. Speaker: Calvin Theological Seminary's Dr. Melvin Hugen on "The Church and Homosexuality — 25 Years Later." Info. and registration: (905) 648-2131 or e-mail to rkling@redeemer.on.ca (#)



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## News

## Christian human rights group testifies to 20 years of atrocities in Latin America

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — The Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA) recently celebrated 20 years of response to the anguished cries of Christians in Latin America in the face of their tortures, murders, unjust imprisonments and the unexplained disappearances.

It was the great repression in Chile starting in 1973 that brought Canadian churches into action. By 1976 it was clear that similar brutality was happening in many countries both in Central and South America, so churches formed ICCHRLA as a help and a witness.

In 1976 an ICCHRLA delegation to Argentina and Uruguay had to gather testimonies in secret meeting places or through whispered conversations in the backs of taxis because of the extreme danger faced by those who denounced abuses committed by the military juntas.

In one dramatic case ICCHRLA members in Peru refused to let a heavily armed military patrol take away a peasant farmer from a hospital where he was being treated after escaping torture at a military barracks, which saved the man's life.

At the 20th anniversary celebration, co-chair Joe Gunn of the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops, dramatically re-



The Todos Santos valley in Guatemala, a country where ICCHRLA has been active.

viewed the 20 year history of ICCHRLA. Annette Dekker of the Christian Reformed Church

shared with Gunn the chairing of the evening's festivities.

A highlight of the evening

was the showing of the half-hour video ICCHRLA prepared in Central America entitled "Peace, What Peace?" The video shows that although civil wars have ended, oppressive economic policies are squeezing the life out of people through loss of jobs and lack of education and medical care.

One evidence of economic oppression is the new "maquilas," factories owned by foreign companies which pay less than minimum wage for sweatshop work. The video premiered on Vision TV and is available to churches.

Another special feature of the evening was the presence of two Central American leaders of human rights activities. Father Javier Giraldo of the Inter-congregational Commission for Justice and Peace, Colombia, spoke of the commission's constructive efforts in the most oppressive country in Central America.

Ronath Ochaeta of the Human Rights Office of the Catholic Archdiocese in Guatemala told of the violence and economic hardship in his country. Both men spoke in Spanish with English translation.

### Send us

ICCHRLA has developed such a solid reputation for reliable and insightful information that Canadian ambassadors to Latin America now come to ICCHRLA for briefing. ICCHRLA also gives regular reports to the Canadian government and to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

At the anniversary celebration held at the Bloor Street United Church and attended by more than 100 Anglos and Hispanics, ICCHRLA rededicated itself to continuing its witness with this prayer:

*Almighty God, most Holy One, who came to us so long ago in the birth of the child Jesus, be born in us again today by the power of the Holy Spirit. You who are forgiving and good, you who love us, hear our cries for true peace. Give us the courage of the prophets to continue to bear witness to the deep wounds of your people.*

*Send us out now, empowered by your Spirit, rededicated to building real justice, real peace and life with dignity for all. Send us out, renewed in our commitment to accompany and struggle in solidarity with the people of Latin America. Amen.*

## From B.C. to Senegal and the Philippines: Fishers and women's groups take stand to protect their way of life

(NC) — The salmon war pitting Canadian trollers against their U.S. counterparts, has spawned more than angry words between West Coast fishers. It has also highlighted how closely-linked fishing is to the way of life of fishing communities around the world.

Take Senegal, for example. More than 60,000 people make their living fishing there. And because Senegal is a major fish supplier for Europe, another 400,000 are dependent on processing and marketing the catch.

That's why the efforts of the 10,000-strong National Traditional Senegalese Fishers Collective (CNPS) to protect inshore fishing is so important.

Development And Peace, a Catholic international development agency, works with CNPS'

member communities, many of whom owe their survival to women in the workforce. It is women, using traditional techniques, who smoke, dry and salt more than a third of the catch.

Despite their proud work ethic and keen desire to expand their businesses, Senegalese women are often denied bank loans and forced to borrow from money lenders who charge up to 40 per cent interest a day.

D&P is trying to change that — both by helping women's groups, establish savings and loans associations, and by creating a thriving seafood processing and marketing program.

D&P members in New Brunswick and Quebec support more than 350 Senegalese women in six coastal villages. One very tangible result has

been a rise in family incomes. Another is pride in new skills, which the Senegalese are passing on from mother to daughter.

### Renewing pride

Halfway around the globe, people on the southern Philippines island of Mindanao are also fighting back in a way that gives them a renewed pride in themselves. Supported by D&P, particularly its members in Atlantic Canada, these Philipinos have created a remarkable Agri-Aqua that's taking a stand to defend inland waters from pollution and from large fishing conglomerates that vacuum the sea clean of produce.

D&P has regional offices coast-to-coast. For information: 1-800-494-1401 or <http://www.dev.org>

## News Digest

### Raelian church wants 'alien' embassy

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. — Members of the Raelian Church, which has 40,000 members worldwide, preach their gospel on the beach: that aliens will come from space if humans build them an embassy, the *Toronto Star* reports.

"They are from a planet in our galaxy, but not in our solar system," says Marie-Helene Parent, a church member from Miami. The church, she says, has raised \$7 million (US) for the embassy, to be built in either Jerusalem or Miami before 2035.

Parent says a model embassy was built of sand on Miami's South Beach, known more as a hangout for models than aliens. The church believes that aliens will return to earth to unite all religions.

### Car thief turns self in

OSLO, Norway (AP) — With a furious car owner in hot pursuit, a car thief decided he would be safer in jail, and called police from the stolen vehicle so they could arrest him.

The owner of the stolen Opel spotted his car while driving 120 km south of Oslo, and tried to reclaim it at a traffic light, police said in mid-January. But the thief hit the gas, and the car's owner took up the chase. Over the next 25 km, the thief called the police on his cellular phone and agreed to meet them at a gas station. The thief confessed to theft, driving without a license and driving under the influence of narcotics.

### Bookstore nuns are savvy

CHICAGO — They're as savvy about the Internet, computers and Mel Gibson as any pop culture expert, but their store is likely the only one in Chicago with its own chapel. The Daughters of St. Paul, a Boston-based group of nuns whose mission is the media, operate 18 bookstores across the U.S. that sell religious books and videos, says the *Toronto Star*.

"We communicate the gospel message through our lives and through all available forms of media," says their mission statement, posted on their Website.